DISSENT

The Choice of Comrades	IGNAZIO SILONE
Russia in Transition	ISAAC DEUTSCHER
Authoritarians of the "Left"	LEWIS COSER and IRVING HOWE
Mendes-France: a Domestic Account	VALOIS
Report on Asian Socialism	SID LENS
From the "Bomb" to . . .?	ARTHUR RAY
Bolshevism and Jacobinism	ALBERT MATHIEZ
Letter from Algeria	EDOUARD RODITI
The Hollywood Imagination	G. L. ARNOLD
A. A. Berle and the Corporate Soul	BEN B. SELIGMAN

WINTER 1955 75c

DISSENT

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The purpose of this magazine is suggested by its name: to dissent from the bleak atmosphere of conformism that pervades the political and intellectual life of the United States: to dissent from the support of the "status quo," now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists; to dissent from the terrible assumption that a new war is necessary or inevitable.

The accent of DISSENT will be radical. Its tradition will be the tradition of democratic socialism. We shall try to reassert the libertarian values of the socialist ideal, and at the same time, to discuss freely and honestly what in the socialist tradition remains alive and what needs to be discarded or modified. We are, it goes without saying, unalterably opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, both of the Fascist and the Stalinist varieties.

DISSENT is not and does not propose to become a political party or group. On the contrary, its existence is based on an awareness that in America today there is no significant socialist movement and that, in all likelihood, no such movement will appear in the immediate future.

DISSENT will not have any editorial position or statements. Each writer will speak for himself. Our magazine will be open to a wide range of opinion, though naturally our editorial emphasis will be such as to favor those contributions which help reestablish socialist thought and value. At the same time we shall welcome any expression of competent thought or scholarly contributions touching upon our area of interest, even if these dissent from DISSENT.

DISSENT, issued January 1, 1954, is published quarterly by Dissent Publishing Association, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. Subscriptions: $2.50 for one year, $2.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, $3.00 for one year. All payments from foreign countries must be made by U. S. money orders or checks payable in U. S. currency. Single copy: $.75.
● Copyright 1955 by Dissent Publishing Association. Permission for reprinting any article must be obtained from the Publishers.
● Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at New York, New York on April 1, 1954 under the authority of the act of March 3, 1879. ● Volume II, No. 1 (Whole Number 5).

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DISSENT

A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

VOLUME II
NUMBER 1

Winter 1955

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341

CONTENTS

PAGE

JOURNAL OF THE QUARTER

REFLECTIONS IN MID-WINTER —*by I. H.* 3

ARTICLES

THE CHOICE OF COMRADES—*by Ignazio Silone* 7
MENDÈS-FRANCE — A DOMESTIC ACCOUNT—*by Valois* 20
RUSSIA IN TRANSITION—*by Isaac Deutscher* 23
AUTHORITARIANS OF THE "LEFT"—*by Lewis Coser and Irving Howe* 40
LETTER FROM ALGERIA—*by Edouard Roditi* 51
A REPORT ON ASIAN SOCIALISM—*by Sid Lens* 56
AMERICAN NOTEBOOK: SCIENCE—FROM THE "BOMB," TO . . . ?—*by Arthur Ray* . 66
WHAT CHANGE IN RUSSIA?—*by Paul Willen* 71
BOLSHEVISM AND JACOBINISM —*by Albert Mathiez* 76

MISCELLANY

THE HOLLYWOOD IMAGINATION—*by G. L. Arnold* .. 87
"WAR PROSPERITY?" — *by Helen Mears* 88
SCIENCE AND RELIGION—*by Ned Polsky* 89
DICK AND JOE—*by S. P.* 91

BOOKS

BERLE AND THE CORPORATE SOUL—*by Ben B. Seligman* 92
THE QUALITY OF LIBERAL THOUGHT — *by Matthew Lipman* 94

LETTERS ..... third cover

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With Much Hope...

On November 6, 1954 nearly 100 friends of DISSENT attended a conference in New York City at which the magazine was thoroughly discussed and criticized; a unanimous opinion expressed that the need for an independent socialist quarterly like DISSENT is greater than ever; and a fund drive for $6,000 launched in order to assure the publication of the magazine in 1955 and 1956.

Since then all subscribers have been asked to contribute to the fund drive. A mimeographed outline of the main report at the conference has been sent to all those whose financial contributions helped launch the magazine—copies of this report are available to any reader who sends in a postcard requesting one. The editors have been working hard to act upon some of the suggestions made at the conference for improving the magazine. Two new editors have been added—Norman Mailer and Bernard Rosenberg, both of whom have been regular writers for DISSENT. And some money has been coming in.

But not yet enough! As of December 15 we have received $4,000 in cash and pledges. Gratifying as this is, it would be unrealistic not to recognize that those of our friends who feel closest to DISSENT have by now probably made their contributions and that, consequently, it may prove difficult to raise the additional $2,000.

We have always been frank with you. We have not indulged in ballyhoo or high pressure. The sum of $6,000 was calculated on the most rigidly economical budget. That is literally what DISSENT needs to survive for two years and to permit the editors to make plans for giving it continuity and development.

The *number* of contributors has been encouraging; the *total* of contributions less so. We note, for example, that most of our original supporters have sent in smaller sums than they did last year.

And the truth is that if we are to keep going, the burden rests primarily on those of our readers who feel one or another degree of active identification with our aim and purpose. What this means, then, is that if you want DISSENT to continue, you must:

1. Send in a contribution if you have not yet done so; add to it if you have.
2. Ask your friend who likes DISSENT to contribute also.
3. Send in several subscriptions for those of your friends who would like DISSENT if they received it.
4. Check to see that your local library, college or town, subscribes.

We earnestly call upon you to help us raise the small sum that we need to guarantee DISSENT's appearance.

The Editors

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Journal of the Quarter

REFLECTIONS IN MID-WINTER

Imagination always lags behind intellect. We know that it is now possible for the whole world to be blown up by hydrogen bombs, yet we cannot really employ this knowledge: it does not come to us as a living image. It is therefore hard to react, except with a kind of numbed horror that goes beyond horror, to the news the Alsop brothers recently printed that a debate is going on "in the highest governmental circles" as to whether to test a "Super-Super" hydrogen bomb several times more powerful than the one exploded at Eniwetok.

The Alsops report that the radiological hazards of such a test are of three kinds—"local fall-out, distant fall-out and general radioactivity." What is euphemistically called "local fall-out" is the effect of one hydrogen bomb: the blanketing of an area of 4,000 square miles with radioactive dust. In the age of the hydrogen bomb, the extinction of a state would be merely a *local* fall-out.

Distant fall-out, by contrast, involves danger to every point on the globe. Some experts, like Dr. A. H. Sturtevant of California, believe that this may lead to "an increase in the probability of malignant growths." Others speak of a long-term "'biological hazard" as the consequence of "distant fall-out," i.e., the danger of stillbirths in areas where the levels of radioactivity have significantly increased. And finally there is the danger that, in the words of British Nobel Prize winner Dr. Edgar Adrian, "repeated atomic explosions will lead to a degree of general radioactivity which no one can tolerate or escape."

The Alsops conclude that the most terrifying fact about this new weapon is "that no one really knows what it will do." Yet there are people in "the highest governmental circles" who would like to test Super-Super—no doubt, to teach the Russians proper respect for the American mind.

What is one to make of it all? One can react with a kind of moral nausea, a thoroughly rational gesture of repudiation of the world as it is. One can speak of the fatal incapacity of the bourgeois world to cope with its enemies except by inventing weapons so dreadful they may destroy it as well. Or one can simply be afraid.

All, clearly enough, valid responses. But at the moment it occurs to us to say to those "highest governmental circles": isn't the H-Bomb enough for any conceivable purpose of destruction? Moral appeals, political strategy, even ordinary caution may be beyond the realm of your understanding, but at least think twice before you destroy the human race *prematurely* . . .

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Co-Existence: The Comedy of Tragedy. Meanwhile, we note the debate that keeps twisting through the pages of the daily press and the liberal journals: co-existence or not? The issue is tragic, the terms comic. Senator Knowland calls co-existence a form of appeasement. An editor of *Commentary* speaks of it simply as a Stalinist slogan. Walter Lippmann asks, with some show of sense and irritation, exactly what Senator Knowland would substitute for co-existence? Aneurin Bevan, after some scandalous praise for the Chinese Stalinists, declares co-existence the only way. President Eisenhower is reported to feel that there is now no alternative to negotiating with the Russians.

We hope in the next issue of DISSENT, or the one after, to organize a full discussion on this topic, but here it may be worth a word or two.

Co-existence is, to be sure, used as a Stalinist slogan. But that in itself should give one pause before totally rejecting the idea or better yet, the sentiment. For it is in the nature of Stalinist slogans—unlike many of those used by the bourgeois West—that they have been carefully tuned to realities, tuned, of course, to exploit realities but no less significant for that.

Co-existence may also mean a deal, of the sort Henry Wallace was advocating some years back, to divide the world into two precise areas of imperial domination and thereby achieve a relative balance of power. One Presidential adviser is quoted by the Alsops as defining co-existence as "A-stay-in-your-backyard-and-we'll-stay-in-our-backyard agreement, with mutual-destruction-the-penalty for straying."

And then co-existence signifies—to us, most important of all—that vast, inchoate yet deeply-felt desire of the European and Asian people to avoid destruction in a war between powers they could not influence or control.

Were co-existence merely a Stalinist slogan, it would present no problem in defining a radical or socialist response. Were it merely a scheme for freezing the world into two rigid blocs, there would be no problem either. But the truth of the matter is that all three elements we have mentioned, as well as others, come into play during discussions of co-existence. Given a situation in which the major capitalist powers are incapable of defeating Stalinism *politically;* in which there seems little likelihood of Stalinism soon crumbling from within; and in which war could only bring the most dreadful political, as well as human, consequences—it follows that, from our point of view, some sort of uneasy balance is necessary or at least unavoidable during the coming period. In the primitive literal sense of co-existence, there seems no alternative to war. Yet the danger is that co-existence may become a means of destroying, through the pressure of the two great powers, all of the potentially creative and independent political forces in the world. The great political value of a period of uneasy truce, apart from the primarily human consideration of preventing an atomic war, is that it gives more *time* —more time to the British Laborites, to the Burmese Socialists, more time to Europe and to Asia. What is desirable for the coming period is: a) no hot war; b) no hard-and-fast geopolitical division of the world along imperialistic lines; c) as much maneuverability and play for any political tendency which, whatever its label, socialist or not, tries to find a way out

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of the impasse. If that be co-existence . . .

From Opposition to Coalition. As soon as the liberals begin claiming a victory, one grows uneasy with expectation of disaster. After the November elections, the liberals claimed victory. Hubert Humphrey, fearless defender of civil liberties, had been reelected. (What, asked an ADA fund letter mailed out while Humphrey was pushing his infamous "Anti-Communist Bill" through Congress, what would America be like if Humphrey weren't reelected? A thought to conjure with!) In New Jersey, Clifford Case, an Eisenhower conservative but not a McCarthyite guttersnipe, was elected; that was a victory too.

Actually, the election was most remarkable for its low political level. Neither party discussed the major problems facing the country: neither said anything about the H-Bomb, or foreign policy, or civil liberties. The Democrats were against unemployment, but it wasn't quite clear whether they were against Hoover's or Eisenhower's unemployment. Both parties tacitly accepted war economy as the permanent base of American life (see Helen Mears' article in this DISSENT). The issue of McCarthyism was gingerly evaded by most politicians, except insofar as Vice President Nixon showed a native gift for absorbing its style.

As far as one can conclude from the narrow margins in most of the elections, the balance of power between the parties remains precarious. The voters, alas, did seem to respond to the issue of "Communists in government"—which is merely a panic symptom of a more legitimate concern with the problem of Communism in Asia. The trade unions, especially in Michigan, perfected their political machines within the Democratic party, but failed to use them for any politically bold or significant purposes. In the main, a kind of apathy not far from fear continues to dominate American political life.

The two party system, which has become an object of veneration to numerous ex-radicals and liberals, continues to prevent any clear articulation of basic political choices. The more the intellectuals declare its virtues to be flexibility, the more, in practice, does it make for an increasing homogeneity and conformism in American political life. Nothing could be more revealing in this regard than the fact that shortly after the election the Democrats—whose victory the liberals had claimed as evidence of *their* victory—announced that they would adopt the attitude of "coalition" toward the Eisenhower administration. Strange politics, stranger logic! If the Eisenhower administration is indeed one of the most inept in American history, and if the election was a rebuke to it, and if the Democratic victories indicated a desire for change—why then should the Democrats soften into the bent posture of coalition the day after their victory?

But we know the answer. *The burdens of responsibility, the virtues of the American pragmatic tradition, the tactics of flexibility . . .*

The Premature Death of McCarthyism. Even before we printed Dennis Wrong's analysis of McCarthyism in the last DISSENT, there was much talk in the liberal press about the coming demise of McCarthy. We were skeptical then, and are more skeptical now. If evidence for McCarthy's weakness is to be found

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in the fact that most of the candidates who enthusiastically endorsed him were defeated, then nothing has actually been proved except what should have been clear all the time, that McCarthyism represents at present a minority, though a very strong minority, in America. Even more ambiguous is the censure motion in the Senate, which has been so qualified, confused and softened by the various maneuvers looking toward a compromise that its passage can hardly be of decisive political significance.

By far the most important event in connection with McCarthyism is that a *movement* seems to be springing up. On top it takes the form of a committee of admirals, generals and industrialists; below, it takes the form, as in Massachusetts, of more or less spontaneous organization of volunteers to circulate petitions in his behalf. That means that even as McCarthy is censured, and even if later he were not to be reelected, *McCarthyism as a political movement* is yet to be heard from. Given the present war prosperity, it would seem unlikely that it could become a dominant force in American politics; given the present mood of political fear and frustration, it would seem equally unlikely that it could fail to become a powerful force and thereby a potential for a fascist movement.

To assume that McCarthy is finished is to make the classical mistake of the liberal mind: the mistake of assuming that the essence of politics consists of parliamentary maneuvers, votes and resolutions.

And a Word on Civil Liberties. What we think of Paul Sweezy's politics is made clear enough elsewhere in this issue of DISSENT. But we believe that he has a right to express his views without being subjected to harassment or persecution. The Sweezy case in New Hampshire, which has been singularly ignored by the official liberal publications as well as (to the best of our knowledge) the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, presents a particularly outrageous attack upon civil and academic freedom.

For several years now Mr. Sweezy has been giving a guest lecture on "Socialism" for a Humanities course at the University of New Hampshire. He is not a member of its faculty nor a government employee. During a local investigation of "subversive activity" Mr. Sweezy was questioned by a legislative committee. He informed this committee that he had never been a member of the Communist Party, but when pressed for information and opinion about the Progressive Party, as well as about his own political writings, he refused to answer on the grounds that the questions were irrelevant, that the Progressive Party is a perfectly legal party and that his writings are in the public domain, accessible to anyone who would read them. It seems to us that he was entirely within his rights. Not even the flimsy excuse sometimes offered for such questionings, that the government has to be careful as to whom it employs, is relevant here, since Mr. Sweezy is simply a private citizen. Nonetheless, he has been convicted for contempt, and an appeal is now pending in a higher court.

There are plenty of other cases that might, and should be mentioned. But we wish especially to call attention to this one despite the fact that we disagree so violently with Mr. Sweezy's politics. What is involved is a clear-cut violation of civil rights. —I. H.

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We are pleased to print in this issue of DISSENT *the following article by the distinguished Italian author who, for many people, has become a symbol of personal integrity and political resistance. The article, which here receives its first American publication, appears by permission of the author. For this publication Mr. Silone has made a number of revisions and additions to the text that originally appeared in several European journals.* —*The Editors*

THE CHOICE OF COMRADES

Ignazio Silone

The last forty years have witnessed the collapse of most of the great politico-social myths bequeathed to us by the 19th century. As a result, certain kinds of people who had relied on these myths as a compass find themselves in a state of spiritual vagueness and ambiguity that is still far from being clarified. This situation is one aspect of the general crisis of capitalism and anti-capitalism. We are confronted with the need for reassessment, not only of the problems of human behavior but also of the greater question of the meaning of our existence. It is not a matter, be it said, even in its subsidiary aspects, of literary diversion. There will always be a number of perfectly respectable people who interpret in their own fashion, by their haircut or the way they knot their ties, the spirit of the age in which they live. For others less fortunate, however, times of crisis may bring graver consequences. My concern in these pages is with them.

Suicide among writers in various countries during the past thirty years has reached an unparalleled figure. It seems to me that however much they may differ outwardly, the majority of these episodes have a common source: what Nietzsche called the nihilism of modern times. The lives of writers are, I think, not less significant than the books they write. Whenever I happen to consider the sense of bewilderment, tedium, and disgust characteristic of our age, my mind turns not to the books of Heidegger, Jaspers, and Sartre but to the suicides of Essenin, Mayakovsky, Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, Stefan Zweig, Klaus Mann, Drieu La Rochelle, F. O. Mathiessen, Cesare Pavese, and other lesser-

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known figures. What a flock of terrifying ghosts they seem, when one names them all together! Persecution, exile, isolation, poverty, illness, abnormality—one or the other of these external reasons has been suggested in each case to explain how a man of talent could have sought such a desperate end. But the last writings of these men before death, or their last confidences to their friends, are invariably a confession of anguish or despair at the effort and the futility of living.

These suicides are not to be easily explained away. To pin responsibility for them on any one political régime would clearly be a misrepresentation, since we know that they occurred under widely differing régimes, in Russia, America, and Western Europe. Still less can we blame the pernicious influence of some pessimistic doctrine; Mayakovsky was the poet of a victorious revolution, and the others, from Zweig to Pavese, were deeply rooted in the humanist or religious traditions of the society from which they came. (Indeed, one might well reverse the explanation and say it was precisely because they were not pessimistic enough, because they had banished *Angst* from their doctrine and their art, that some of them were to end by succumbing to it so miserably. Inhibition is more deadly than sincerity.)

The decadence of our age, however, had already begun prior to these tragic episodes. It has not merely engulfed a number of cultivated and hypersensitive individuals; it has invaded entire classes and institutions, not even sparing the people. Nietzsche was the first to define this decadence, calling it nihilism, as I said, and giving the word a new meaning that it has retained, a meaning different from that found in Turgenev's famous novel. Since then, wars and revolutions in constant succession have borne out Nietzsche's prophecy, making evident what in his day was still perhaps obscure.

Nihilism, as Nietzsche conceived it, is the identification of goodness, justice, and truth with self-interest. Nihilism is the conviction that beliefs and ideas are, ultimately, a mere façade with nothing real behind them, and that consequently only one thing really matters, really counts: success. It is nihilistic to sacrifice oneself for a cause in which one does not believe, while pretending to believe in it. It is nihilistic to exalt courage and heroism independently of the cause they serve, thus equating the martyr with the hired assassin. And so on.

How did we come to this pass? The First World War is generally blamed as the cause and origin of the disaster; but would that war ever have broken out in the first place had the civilized world not already been in a state of crisis? The war merely demonstrated how fragile were the myths of progress on which capitalist civilization was based. Even in the victorious countries, venerable institutions were

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subjected to such terrible ordeals that they began to to er like rotten scaffolding. And from them, skepticism and corruptic ı spread and seeped downwards to the very foundation of society. Tra litional moral and religious values, rashly invoked to prop up the ' :sted interests which were being threatened, were thereby compromised.

The authoritarian restoration which followed the wa —first in Italy and the Balkans, later in Germany and elsewhere—was a remedy worse than the disease. How could conservatives ever have delu ed themselves into thinking that political tyranny of any kind would (iminate nihilism? On the contrary, fascism in all its forms meant tha nihilism was installed in power. The dictatorships strengthened the (d instruments of coercion and created new ones, but they did not creat a new moral order; indeed, with their atmosphere of fear and servil y, they aggravated and exacerbated the general decadence. With ıe collapse of these régimes, the basic nihilism remained, buried de p in peoples' consciences.

And so in many ways we are back where we were, xcept that we are once again free to discuss the moral situation of man ithout having to make concessions to a false optimism, dissimulation n : being a civic virtue in a democracy.

Political régimes may come and go, bad habits rei ain. The big difficulty is this: nihilism is not an ideology, it cannot be l gislated about, it is not a subject for school curricula; it is a disease of t e spirit which can be diagnosed only by those who are immune from i or have been cured of it, but to which most people are quite oblivi us, since they think it corresponds to a perfectly natural mode of being "That's how it has always been; that's how it will always be."

We are all familiar with the picture which post-N etzschean and existentialist literature has drawn of the predicament of present-day man. It can be summarized as follows: all links betwee the existence and the being of man are broken; existence has no n aning beyond itself; what is human is reduced to mere vitality. Before ommenting on what I consider the provisional and transient nature o this represen- tation, I feel bound to state that in some respects I find praiseworthy. I think sincerity is always to be admired, especially if it requires a certain amount of courage, for without sincerity neither n rality nor art can exist. And moreover, at the stage to which things ar now reduced, I as a writer see no other way, outside the freedom of rt, of placing before the minds of men the problems which elude the n, and of presenting them with a truer image of themselves than that which they see daily in the mirror. However, literature cannot take u a permanent abode in a nihilist situation, and the only way out for i I think, is to explore courageously the entire surface of this situation. Anyone under-

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taking to do so with absolute intellectual honesty and an uncorrupted heart should sooner or later be able to reach its farthest limit. At that point, one of two things will happen to him: either he will find the abyss of suicide yawning at his feet, or else he will rediscover some valid meaning in human existence. This is no abstract hypothesis, but the plain truth of what has happened to quite a number of people.

THE EXAMPLES ARE FAR FROM INSIGNIFICANT. Here I shall only mention two: the literary path of Ernst Jünger and that of Albert Camus. The German writer reached the farthest limit of nihilism in his famous message *Der Arbeiter.* In this description of a new type of proletarian, depersonalized and standardized, without heart, soul, or brain—a living robot—he depicted the protagonist of the transformation which is taking place in modern society. The greatest freedom of this human robot would consist in being mechanically employed in the series of civil and imperialist wars on which we have already embarked and which will dominate the coming centuries. "To sacrifice oneself for a faith," wrote Ernst Jünger, "means to reach one's maximum, irrespective of whether that faith is true or false. The mere fact that men throw themselves into the fray, even though they are knotted up with a fear that no discipline and no love of country can dispel, makes them, like martyrs, bear witness to an ultra-human reality that is beyond and within them." The heroism of Jünger's proletarian robots would therefore be all the more sublime the remoter it was from the traditional human sphere and the more closely it resembled that of highly perfected machines. This was a final point beyond which it was impossible to advance. Ernst Jünger retreated from it in time, while Hitler was still in power. In his subsequent works, among which may be mentioned the pages on pain, the novel *Auf den Marmorklippen,* and the diary he kept during the invasion of France in the Second World War, his condemnation of nihilism is increasingly explicit and increasingly based on human motives.

The experience of Albert Camus is different but analogous. No reader of his books can fail to discern the sharp contrast dividing *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* and *L'Etranger* on the one hand, from *La Peste* and the book of essays entitled *L'Homme Révolté* on the other. Camus opens *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* with the concept of suicide, in order to distil from it an explanation of the meaning of life. He bluntly defines as absurd the reasons for living. "To die voluntarily," he writes, "implies that one has recognized, at least instinctively, the absurd nature of this habit, the absence of any serious reason for living, the senselessness of this daily agitation and the futility of suffering." To kill oneself means "simply to recognize that life is not worth the trouble." In compassion Camus finds the cure for this desolate sense of the absurd. "The

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world in which I live repels me," he wrote later, in *L'Homme Révolté*, "but I feel with its suffering inhabitants." In his novel *La Peste* the existence of the characters is presented, not as the impassive unfolding of arbitrary and meaningless facts, but as the compassionate encounter of human beings suffering and struggling against a common destiny.

At a certain point in *La Peste* one of the characters—Rieux, a doctor—meets a municipal clerk named Grand whose wife has just left him, with no ill-will on either side. "From a distance he looked at Grand, who was standing almost glued to a shop window full of roughly carved wooden toys. Tears were streaming down the cheeks of the old clerk. And those tears shook Rieux, because he understood them and could feel them in the dryness of his own throat. He could even remember the day when the poor fellow had got engaged to be married; he had seen him standing in front of a shop decked out for Christmas, with Jeanne bending towards him, telling him she was happy. No doubt but that Jeanne's fresh voice was echoing now to Grand across the distant years. Rieux knew what the old, weeping man was thinking of at that moment, and he too thought that without love this world of ours is a dead world, and that there always comes a time when, weary of the prisons of work and courage, one wants the face of another human being and a heart filled with the wonder of tenderness. . . . He felt Grand's unhappiness as his own, and something gnawed at his heart at that moment—the fierce anger that comes over one at the suffering which human beings have to endure." Even the revolt born of pity alone can restore meaning to life.

André Malraux presents a more remarkable case because this French descendant of Nietzsche, through his progress from Communism back to nationalism, gives the impression of having remained a Nietzschean at heart all the time. The stormy curve of his life's journey does indeed seem the adventure of a "superman" seeking tests and opportunities for his own dreams of glorification. Nevertheless it would be unjust to consider it as a superficial movie-hero affair. Between *La Tentation de l'Occident* and *La Psychologie de l'Art* there is more than a change of scene. In 1926 Malraux was announcing the historical downfall of Europe, "this cemetery where only dead conquerors sleep." The Communist revolt of the colored peoples seemed to offer him hope; but how ambiguous was his adherence to it. The virile sense of a new brotherhood of man alternated, in the pages of *La Condition Humaine*, with the intoxication of action for its own sake. In *Le Temps du Mépris*, brotherhood was invoked more wholeheartedly, as the last resort against nihilist desperation. It was an active sympathy, consecrated by the sacrifices which culminated in the act of an unknown comrade who saved Kassner, the Communist leader, from Nazi torture. But did this

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member act on his own initiative or by order of the party machine? And can brotherhood be founded on anything but freedom and personal responsibility? "Economic servitude is hard," old Alvear was to say in *L'Espoir,* "but if in order to destroy it we are obliged to strengthen political or military or religious or police servitude, then what does it matter to me in comparison?" Revolutions, like trees, are to be judged by their fruits, and not by the effort they cost.

I KNOW THAT THESE ARE ISOLATED EXAMPLES, and that one or even two swallows do not make a summer. Still they do point to a path of salvation, a true way out of nihilism, which springs from a sure and indestructible element deep-rooted in man.

But to return to my point. The particular spiritual condition I wish to discuss has affinities with the instances I have just mentioned. However, it follows a different path and has a significance of its own. For example, it never starts from philosophical or scientific conviction, but almost always from simple instinctive revolt against family or social surroundings. One fine Sunday some of us stopped going to Mass, not because Catholic dogma seemed to us, all of a sudden, false, but because the people who went began to bore us and we were drawn to the company of those who stayed away. A young man's revolt against tradition is a frequent occurrence in every age and every country, and his reasons are not always clear to the onlooker. According to circumstances, it can lead to the Foreign Legion, to common crime, to a film career, to a monastery, or to political extremism. What characterized our revolt was the choice of comrades. Outside our village church stood the landless peasants. It was not their psychology that we were drawn to: it was their plight. A choice once made, the rest, as experience shows, follows automatically. Without the slightest attempt at resistance, indeed with the well-known fervor of neophytes, one accepts the language, symbols, organization, discipline, tactics, program and doctrine of the party to which one's new comrades belong. It is hardly surprising that rarely should anything learned in the catechism and schoolbooks hinder one's docile acceptance of the new orthodoxy. Indeed, one does not even feel the need of refuting them, because all of that has become part of the world on has left behind. They are neither true nor false: they are "bourgeois," dead leaves. The choice is emotional, beyond logic. And the claim of the new orthodoxy, which one has accepted so completely, to be scientific and objective—that is not the least of the inconsistencies which you will vainly seek to force on the attention of the convert.

This is the rule. I have read a certain number of biographies of anarchists, socialists, communists and fascists, and I am more or less familiar with the circumstances that led some of my acquaintances into political activity; so far I have found no exceptions to the pattern I

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have just described, and if any do exist, I think they are rare. We proclaim ourselves revolutionaries or conservatives for motives, often ill-defined, that are deep within us, and before choosing we are, unknown to ourselves, chosen. As for the new ideology, we learn that, usually, at the schools of the party to which we have already pledged allegiance by an act of faith. Altogether similar—and just as it should be—is the opposite process of abjurement. Ideology is now given the same rough treatment once meted out to the catechism and to patriotic stories. To speak in old-fashioned terms, the head, even in the process of re-learning, is towed along by the heart—or, according to the health of the person in question, by the stomach.

THERE IS ONE DUTY, HOWEVER, THAT WE CANNOT EVADE: to be aware of what is happening. What could the landless peasants of his Southern Italian village have meant to a young student, in the years immediately preceding the First World War, that he should embrace their cause? He was certainly not thinking of politics as a career. Besides, he as yet knew nothing of the proud Marxist prophecy acclaiming the proletariat as the legitimate heir of modern philosophy. Neither did he know that, after the Milanese revolution of 1848, Carlo Cattaneo had declared the cause of the proletariat to be indissolubly linked thenceforth with that of freedom, one destined to travel through the coming ages with the other, like horseman and rider. He had as yet heard nothing of Rosa Luxemburg's theory of the natural impulse to revolution of the working class, or of Lenin's theory of the forces which propel modern society on the path of progress. Nor did he know of Sorel or other prophets of the new Messiah. But if the new revolutionary theories of the historical mission of the proletariat had not yet reached that remote district of Southern Italy, emigrants returned from America were already prompting the landless peasants to form their first resistance leagues. It is not to be wondered at that a young man already secretly disgusted with his surroundings, witnessing this unaccustomed ferment, should undergo a profound change of heart and become convinced that in an old, tired, decrepit, blasé society such as the one in which he lived, the poor represented the final refuge of life —something real, to which it would be wholesome to attach oneself.

Those were the declining years of an epoch in which a number of events had seemed to prove the myth about the liberating mission of the proletariat. The fascination of that myth spread far beyond the narrow limits of party politics. It was the great popular alternative to the nihilist decadence of Nietzsche's prophecy—the promise of a new earth and a new heaven. Morals, art, philosophy were all directly influenced by it. And events seemed to indicate that Rosa Luxemburg was right. In those years one did not yet risk contradiction if one claimed

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that wherever a workers' organization was active, under whatever régime, in whatever climate or social conditions, despite its shortcomings it would move "naturally" towards freedom and renewal. Indeed, a certain episode occurred around 1905 in Moscow which has remained a classic in the history of the workers' movement and seemed to have been created for the express purpose of proving even to skeptics how well founded was the theory of Rosa Luxemburg about the liberating impulse of the working class. The Tsarist secret police, the Okhrana, decided to encourage the formation of a labor union in the hope of drawing underground agitators into it and arresting them. These, however, scented a trap and kept clear of it; but the labor union, despite its police origin, became of its own accord a revolutionary organization, so that the Okhrana was soon obliged to disband it.

Since then, as we all know, the myth of the liberating power of the proletariat has dissolved along with that other myth of the inevitability of progress. The recent examples of the Nazi labor unions, those of Salazar and Peron and, in a broader sense, all reformist and cooperative unions, have at last convinced of this even those who were reluctant to admit it on the sole grounds of the totalitarian degeneration of Communism. Now, however, the decline of that myth must be obvious to anyone who takes the trouble to inform himself of the conditions prevailing in the world beyond his own backyard. It is no longer merely a question of a few privileged workers (the so-called "proletarian aristocracy" of the imperialist countries, made possible by the exploitation of colonial peoples); nor of the inferior groups on the margin of the productive process (the so-called *Lumpenproletariat*); but of the normal working classes. Today an experiment such as the Okhrana made in 1905 would not necessarily be doomed to failure. For Marxists the moral to be drawn is clear: a similar way of living no longer determines an identical or analogous way of thinking. Class consciousness is no longer a natural product of class. Ever since this situation arose, ever since there ceased to exist a world-wide trend of the working classes towards freedom, human life has acquired a new aspect, spiritually as well as politically. The workers' world is spiritually broken up. It is multiform. The horse of Carlo Cattaneo has thrown its rider and gone wild again. The worker, as we have seen and as we continue to see, can work for the most conflicting causes; he can be Blackshirt or partisan, executioner or victim, or simply, in rich and peaceful countries, a lazy philistine with no ideals, insured against unemployment, old age, illness, and also against the risk that the insurance company might go bankrupt. But generally, in poor countries, because of his relative political simplicity, he can still be the prey of extremists. He can still be Christ, taking on himself the sins of others; and he can also be Barabbas, an

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ignoble totalitarian Barabbas, trampling on all that is most human in man. Either way, he is a protagonist on the world stage. He is the *deus ex machina* of modern politics. It is futile to think that this fact can be abolished, or that any democracy can maintain itself for very long, propped by police tribunals in the face of working-class opposition. The vital role of the workers in production, their numbers, their greater social compactness and homogeneity—the sum of these factors in every country gives them the decisive voice in politics. No other single element is so powerful. On it depends the freedom of mankind, and much else. But since it is no longer class that decides, but conscience, we are back where we started.

ONE NEED ONLY LOOK AROUND ONE to see the state to which consciences have been reduced. Nihilism has spread from the upper classes over the entire surface of the social fabric: the epidemic has not spared the working-class districts. Today the nihilist cult of force and success is universal. And the widespread virtue that identifies History with the winning side, the ignoble cowardice that leads so many intellectuals to Communism or to McCarthy—that too is nihilism. Are the dead, are the weak always in the wrong? Was Mazzini wrong? Was Trotsky wrong only because he was defeated? Were Gobetti and Matteotti wrong? And did Gramsci begin to be right only after April 1945? Will he cease to be right if the strength of his party declines? And is fear of the hydrogen bomb the fear of a stronger right, a right therefore more convincing than the others?

To the general feeling of personal insecurity which in our age has been engendered by the economic crisis and the intrusion of the state and politics into every field of human activity, there corresponds the anxious search by individuals for some kind of security and protection in one or other of the political mass parties. This by no means excludes, incidentally, a double game with the opposing party, which might be the winner tomorrow. If ideological criticisms and moral campaigns cannot shake the compactness of the mass parties, if they leave the majority of their members indifferent, it is precisely for the reason already mentioned: those joining the mass parties out of inner ideological conviction are very few. And to the opportunism of individuals obsessed with their own security and that of their families, there is added the usurping tendency of collective organizations. Frankly, I cannot think of a single collective organization today which could be said to be untainted by the leprosy of nihilism. Group living, it would almost seem, creates the most favorable temperature for the incubation of its germs. Human stupidity is so monotonous. The deathly mechanism is always the same: every group or institution arises in defense of an ideal, with which it rapidly comes to identify itself and for which it

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finally substitutes itself altogether, proclaiming its own interests as the supreme value. "Whoever injures the Party is against History." The members of the group in question are unruffled by this procedure; in fact, they find it serves their purposes. The advantages are by no means negligible, because they are completely absolved from all personal responsibility. In the deplorable event of someone having a scruple, all he need do is bring his problem to the propaganda office. If the matter is delicate, the answer will be delivered to him at home. Few people realize that the tyranny of means over ends is the death of even the noblest ends. And it is a mere mystification to claim that the reduction of human beings to the status of instruments and raw materials can ever ensure human happiness.

There is no more melancholy image than that of the persecuted who in their turn become persecutors. Here I should like to recall the terrible letter which Simone Weil wrote to Georges Bernanos in the spring of 1938 about the Spanish Civil War. The Catholic-royalist writer's vehement indictment of the excesses of the Franco repression in Majorca is countered by the anguished confession of the young revolutionary intellectual, then a volunteer on the Republican side. The letter has been published only recently. It expresses a sensitive woman's horror at the useless massacres which accompanied these events. But she had witnessed something else that had made an even more painful impression on her than brute violence. A purer-hearted witness or a more exemplary circumstance would be hard to find.

"I have never seen," she writes, "either among the Spaniards or among the French who have come here to fight or to amuse themselves (the latter often being gloomy, harmless intellectuals) anyone who expressed, even in private conversation, repugnance or disgust for, or even only disapproval of, unnecessary bloodshed. You talk of fear. Yes, fear has played a part in these killings; but where I was I did not find that it played as large a part as you ascribe to it. Men to all appearances courageous, when dining with friends, would relate with a warm, comradely smile how they had killed priests or 'fascists'—a word of elastic meaning. I felt that whenever a certain group of human beings is relegated, by some temporal or spiritual authority, beyond the pale of those whose life has a price, then one finds it perfectly natural to kill such people. When one knows one can kill without risk or punishment or blame, one kills; or at least one smiles encouragingly at those who kill. If at first one happens to feel some revulsion, one hides it, stifles it, fearing to seem lacking in virility. There seems to be in this some impulse or intoxication which it is impossible to resist without a strength of mind which I am obliged to consider exceptional, since I have not found it in anyone. On the contrary, I have seen sober Frenchmen whom

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I had not previously despised—men who of their own accord would never have thought of killing anyone—plunging with obvious relish into that blood-soaked atmosphere. The very aim of the struggle is blotted out by an atmosphere of this kind. Because the aim can be formulated only in terms of the public good, the good of human beings; and human beings have no value." And the letter ends: "One sets out as a volunteer, with ideas of sacrifice, only to find oneself in a war of mercenaries, with a great deal of unnecessary cruelty thrown in."

Of course there will be people foolish enough to dismiss Simone Weil's letter as defeatist; but the defeat had preceded it, as an illness precedes its diagnosis. In this worldwide moral shipwreck, what scrap of driftwood can one clutch in order not to drown? Among the reflections of Simone Weil collected under the title *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*, we find this indirect answer, the validity of which goes far beyond politics: one must, she says, "always be ready to change sides with justice, that fugitive from the winning camp."

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY NOW from the very simple situation in which some of us revolted against our family surroundings and went over to the side of the proletariat. The proletariat of this world are no longer in agreement among themselves; they are no longer the incarnation of a myth, and if one were to follow them blindly and unconditionally one might find oneself where least one wants to be. The initial choice must now be followed by another. To judge men, it is no longer enough to see if they have calloused hands: one must look into their eyes. There is no mistaking the look of Cain. Do we side with the inmates of the slave-labor camps or with their jailers? This dilemma we can no longer evade, because the executioners themselves are forcing it on us. Threateningly they demand: "Are you with us or against us?" We must call a spade a spade. We are certainly not going to sacrifice the poor to the cause of freedom, nor freedom to the poor, or rather to the usurping bureaucrats who have climbed on the shoulders of the poor. It is a matter of personal honor to keep faith with those who are being persecuted for their love of freedom and justice. This keeping faith is a better rule than any abstract program or formula. In this age of ours, it is the real touchstone.

It should be apparent from the foregoing why humanism in general, literary or philosophical, means very little to us. Perhaps the time for it will come again, but at present we feel very remote from the serenity and harmony it represents. To us it seems that the self-complacency of man implicit in humanism has scant foundation nowadays. Mankind today is in poor shape. Any portrait of modern man, if at all faithful to the original, cannot but be deformed, split, fragmentary—in a word, tragic.

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This confession of humility does not cost us an effort, since we have no answers to the supreme questions about man's origin and his destiny. Frankly, these traditional problems do not even trouble us. We have stopped pondering the riddle of egg-or-chicken priority, for what is perhaps a very banal reason: we are not responsible for it, and whichever way things may originally have happened, it was not our fault. That is not the sort of problem that can give us sleepless nights. The problems that beset us are those of our present existence, of our responsibility as men of today. Only within these limits can we reach a true definition of ourselves.

This amounts to saying that we are not believers, we are not atheists, and still less are we skeptics. These labels, with their conventional implications, do not concern us. Anyone who tries to attach them to us will merely increase terminological confusion. A distaste for verbalism and facile consolations holds us back from more general statements. A proper awe of the transcendental prevents us from taking its name in vain and using it as a narcotic. And if we are not too proud to confess that there have been moments of anguish and solitude when our thoughts returned with piercing nostalgia to the tradition-bound order, the peace and security, of the home we knew in childhood, we are nevertheless obliged to add that love of truth has always ended by prevailing over considerations of personal convenience.

In a situation where the premises of metaphysics and even of history are uncertain and open to question, the moral sense is forced to extend its scope, taking on the additional function of guide to knowledge. The pitfall of abstract and superficial moralism can be a real one, but only if the moral sense is operating on a *tabula rasa*. In reality, even beyond one's frontiers of awareness, one remains a creature of flesh and blood, a man of a certain region, a certain class, and a certain time. For our part, the vital resource which saves us from the extremist situation of nihilism can be easily identified: the same emotional charge which impelled us to our initial choice has not been exhausted by disillusionment. This is not an individual case. I am not using the pronoun "we" as a puffed-up form of the first person singular. Our number is an ever-swelling legion: the legion of refugees from the International. There are really a great many, belonging to no church or political party, who now bear in secret these same burning stigmata.

DOES ANYTHING AT ALL REMAIN TO US? Yes, there are some unshakable certainties. To my way of feeling, they are Christian certainties. They appear to me so deeply immured in human existence as to be identified with it. Man disintegrates when they are denied.

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This is too little to constitute a profession of faith, but it is enough for a declaration of trust. The trust is founded on something more stable and more universal than the mere compassion of Albert Camus. It is founded, in the last analysis, on the certainty that we human beings are free and responsible; that we feel the need of reaching out to touch the inmost reality of our fellow-men; and that spiritual communion is possible. The fact that spiritual communion is possible—surely this is the irrefutable proof of human brotherhood? Furthermore, it contains a rule of life. Love of the oppressed is born from it as a corollary that the disillusionments of history—the love being of a disinterested nature—can never place in doubt. To be valid, it does not need success. With these certainties as a basis for existence, how can we resign ourselves to seeing man's noblest faculties stifled in so many human creatures born to poverty and wretchedness? How can we conceive of a moral life from which this fundamental concern is absent?

Need I add that this is not to be interpreted in political terms of power or tyranny? To use the oppressed as a stepping-stone to power and then betray them is undoubtedly the most wicked of all sacrileges, because of all human beings they are the most defenseless. Frankly we must confess that we have no panacea. There is no panacea for social evils. All we have—and it is a great deal—is this trust that makes it possible for us to go on living. We are forced to pick our steps beneath a sky that is, ideologically speaking, dark. The clear, ancient Mediterranean sky, once filled with shining constellations, is overcast; but this small circle of light that remains to us enables us at least to see where to place our feet for the next step.

This amounts to saying that the spiritual situation I have just described admits neither of defense nor of arrogance. Frankly, it is merely an expedient. It resembles a refugee encampment in no-man's-land, an exposed makeshift encampment. What do you think refugees do from morning to night? They spend most of their time telling one another the story of their lives. The stories are anything but amusing, but they tell them to one another, really, in an effort to make themselves understood.

As long as there remains a determination to understand and to share one's understanding with others, perhaps we need not altogether despair.

Translated by DARINA SILONE

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MENDÈS-FRANCE—A DOMESTIC ACCOUNT

Valois

PARIS.

Premier Pierre Mendès-France, it is reported here, is being criticized in the United States for lacking a sense of humor. Be that as it may, for the first time in recent history the entertainers of Montmartre are at a loss for jokes at the expense of the head of the government. One of the most popular of these tells his nightly audiences that if Mendès-France remains in office over a year, he will be unable to pay his taxes due to a shortage of "material."

It is difficult to decide just what factor was most helpful in the rise of Mendès-France: the disaster in Indo-China, the beet and alcohol scandals, the "picayune politics" of M. Bidault at the Foreign Office, or the events in North Africa. But this is certain: loss of confidence in the state, much more than the question of the standard of living, was at the root of the social dissatisfaction, and the "Mendès revolution" aims at restoring this confidence rather than altering basic institutions.

The term "palace revolution" perhaps best fits the new regime. Mendès-France came to power by maneuvering along the margins of the main political current set up by the 1951 elections. Faced with an unmanageable parliament, he had sometimes to play a card from the hand of the Communists, sometimes from that of General Juin, and even from that of De Gaulle.

FROM 1945 TO 1948 THE VARIOUS FRENCH GOVERNMENTS reflected mainly the forces of the Resistance and Liberation. After 1948, they represented nothing but a political mechanism with its axis in the Center parties and its sole function that of elevating the concept and practice of "do-nothingism" to the level of a fine art. In the exchanges between parliament and the government one could distinguish only the raised voices of the small and middle entrepreneurs—a strong economic and conservative political force in France, but one lacking any long-range perspective and made up of an accumulation of individual appetites rather than a solid social bloc. This conglomerate power is an immobilizing and retarding factor, with its individual sectors constantly jockeying for advantage and concerned mainly with an easy way out through high prices and government subsidies.

It is difficult to define the attitude of Big Business toward this subgrouping, but there is ample evidence that it has not been totally indifferent to the pillaging of credit, the shady operations of beet and

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alcohol kings, and the general decadence born of political inertia. It is known, for example, that the French bourgeoisie no longer supported the war in Indo-China, that the Bank of Indo-China had withdrawn from that "wasps' nest" to other, more profitable fields. In its final stages, the Indo-Chinese war was a war of the pirates and black marketeers of foreign exchange allied with a bureaucratic and military clique.

To some extent at least, Mendès-France represents the desire of Big Business to "clean up" the French economy in order to extend its internal market and defend itself more effectively against foreign competition. It would be a mistake, nonetheless, to attempt to dismiss Mendès-France as the tool of big capital. French society is no longer what it was in the 'Twenties and 'Thirties. Nationalization of coal, gas, electricity, railways and banks plus state controls under various forms have profoundly altered the outlines and internal structure of those vast holdings which in 1936 were conveniently ascribed to the "200 families." The capitalists have survived by and large, but are now linked to the state apparatus where the rules are somewhat different.

A prominent trade unionist recently remarked: "Everybody agrees now that the social structure should be changed. Even the most intransigeant representatives of capitalism do not deny it, but they want time—time to act in easy stages with what they term 'prudence' and 'moderation.' They believe themselves capable of directing the unavoidable transformation of society." Mendès-France voiced this idea indirectly last year when he warned: "We are in 1788." By this he was saying not that "We are on the eve of revolutionary upheavals," but rather that "We are still in a position to avoid the revolution if we act."

A general cleaning up and modernization of French economy, Mendès-France believes, will give it new possibilities for life. His policy of "reconversion"—i.e., squeezing out marginal enterprises through abolition of state subsidies—is in no way original. Edgar Faure, a more moderate politician, has voiced the same views. But Mendès-France's merit lies in posing the problem in concrete political terms.

LAST JUNE IT LOOKED AS IF MENDES-FRANCE might come to power as the momentary leader of a new Popular Front with the Communists as its working-class base. But now paradoxically he emerges as the main obstacle to such an alignment. He has proved it possible to conduct foreign policy without the participation of the Communists. And he competes with them on their home grounds through a "revolution of wages" which he makes an integral part of his program.

It is in relation to this question of wages that the political personality of the new premier emerges most distinctly. Note that the budget now proposed to the French parliament is on every point similar to the one proposed last year by the Laniel government. It is the style and accents that are changed. A trade-union commentator refers to this period as "a cold June 1936," a June 1936 without the masses. The strike-wave of August 1953 served as a warning which was taken serious-

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ly, it seems. Mendès-France is able to announce a wage increase together with a further one for this April, without provoking real opposition.

By simple decree, Mendès-France increased the premium in relation to the lowest salaries, thus raising the minimum wage from 116 to 121.50 francs per hour. Simultaneously, he reassured employers by stating that there would be no general increase applying to the whole scale of wages. If the minimum is enforced, however, particularly in the provinces where most violations occur, a general increase of wages will result.

As Mendès-France pointed out to trade-union leaders, the government has four weapons for encouraging employer compliance: (1) grant or refuse credits, (2) grant or withdraw state contracts, (3) grant or withdraw subsidies in certain cases, and (4) manipulate, to the advantage or disadvantage of an employer, various financial prerogatives.

Should one conclude from this, as some observers have, that Mendès-France is a man of the Left? Emphatically not. He views the social scene not with the eyes of a socialist but with those of an able technician. He sees clearly that stabilization is impossible without raising the standard of living and that the redistribution of labor within the framework of reconversion requires wage agreements. He is certainly not a man of the Left in any traditional sense, but a man who seeks a certain social equilibrium based on a healthy economic life and improved living conditions. It is up to the socialists to deal with socialism. The task of Mendès-France is immediately to give French society a measure of new life.

That is what many French intellectuals have clearly felt. By intellectuals I do not here mean the apostles of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Temps Modernes* or Claude Bourdet's *Observateur,* who have been disappointed by Mendès-France's "Atlantic" orientation. I mean the students, the technicians, the members of the liberal professions. They have been captivated by a man who is direct, active and does not care for grandiloquent speeches. They see in him a man of neither the Left nor Right but simply one who has intelligence and energy and who might perhaps liquidate the parties—the parties, that is, not in the democratic or parliamentary sense of the word, but the sordid little clans, the "secret societies," which slowly empty parliamentarism of all substance.

It has often been stated that the social and political disintegration of the owning class would spread demoralization among the workers as well. This tends to be the case in France where one section of the labor movement is subsidized by one outside power and another by a second power, where it is propelled first in one direction and then the other by whatever political wind blows strongest and where it is periodically disrupted by the incapacity or venality of its leaders. It may very well be that the labor movement will soon find itself in conflict with Mendès-France. Nevertheless he will have given it a chance—the chance to act according to its own interests without first having to ask what the Communists will or will not do. Whether it will be able to take advantage of this opportunity is as yet anyone's guess.

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In the summer 1954 issue of DISSENT *there appeared an article by Isaac Deutscher, entitled "The Future of Russian Society," in which he developed his views on the nature of Stalinism. These views were subjected to criticism and comment in the same issue by Lewis Coser and by Henri Rabassiere; in the fall 1954 issue by Pierre Tresse; and in the present issue* *(see p. 71)* *by Paul Willen. As announced at the beginning of this discussion, Mr. Deutscher was invited to reply to his critics. His reply follows.* —*The Editors*

RUSSIA IN TRANSITION

Isaac Deutscher

The Editors of DISSENT have invited me to wind up the controversy which has gone on on these pages over my views on the present state of Soviet society. Before replying to my critics I would like to make a preliminary remark about the origin of this controversy. My essay which appeared in DISSENT under the title "The Future of Soviet Society" was originally published in the French *Esprit* under the title "A Reply to Critics"—it was not in fact intended to cover a subject as wide as the future of Russian society. The Editors of DISSENT introduced the essay with the words that it was "perhaps the most systematic and concise exposition of [my] theories." While I appreciate the kind intention which prompted them to make this remark, I cannot claim to have attempted anything like a systematic exposition of a theory. To my mind it is still too early for any serious analyst to develop a systematic theory on the transition period through which the Soviet Union is passing. I have only sketched a highly tentative analysis and a working hypothesis.

In saying this I am not prompted by conventional modesty but by the overwhelming sense of our being placed right in the middle of a deep, confused, and fluctuating historic tide; a position from which it is legitimate and necessary to try and gauge the main direction of the tide, its impetus and its cross-currents, but from which it may well be impossible to measure faultlessly impact, distance, flux and reflux, and to obtain a clear view of the horizon. After the French revolution at least half a century had to elapse before historians and social analysts had gained enough perspective to be able to see and judge the meaning and the effects of the revolution, to grasp the discrepancy between its

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objective significance and its subjective reflections in the minds of its contemporaries, and to decipher the conflicting class interests hidden behind universal symbols, ideas, and slogans. Yet it took the great French revolution only a quarter of a century before it had run its full course. The Russian revolution, for all the diversity of its successive phases, is, towards the end of its fourth decade, still with us; and it will be with us for a long time to come. We are still placed in relation to it in a position much more comparable to that from which people viewed the French revolution in the early years of the 19th century than to that from which Marx or Tocqueville could look back on that revolution. However convinced I may be of the correctness of my views that conviction is always mingled with an uneasy awareness of a possible or even inevitable discrepancy between the objective aspect of the Russian revolution and our subjective ideas or illusions about it. No open-minded student of Soviet developments can fail at present to see them in a perspective different from that in which he viewed them ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago. And who can say how the image of the revolution will define itself when it is viewed and focused from new vantage points ten or twenty years hence, not to speak of a more remote future?

For the present, however, we must view that image from the vantage point given to us. And even from this we should be able to advance our understanding. What I must reproach my critics with is that they seem to have formed more or less dogmatic views from obsolescent or obsolete vantage points. I am probably not alone in being struck by the extent to which views on the Soviet Union expressed in the West lag behind the times. In the 1930s people were inclined to view Russia through a prism through which it may have been legitimate to view her in the 1920s. Few, very few were then aware of the chasm between the Leninist and the Stalinist phases of the Soviet regime. Similarly the Russia of the 1940s, not to speak of that of the 1950s, is often analyzed in terms which might have been appropriate for use in the 1930s. A similar time-lag occurs, of course, in our thinking about any other nation: it is only part of the general lagging of the human mind behind the material changes, open and latent, in social life. But the time-lag is most pronounced in our thinking about Russia, because hardly any contemporary nation changes so significantly from decade to decade as Russia does. I do not intend to deny the element of historic continuity. I myself have tried to trace many features of the early Russian Tsarist Empire in contemporary Russia. But together with continuity there is also the strong and rapid flux of life which threatens to overtake and does overtake the onlooker.

Industrialization and Social Progress

I have tried to throw into relief the profound effect of Soviet industrialization on the outlook of Soviet society. My critics do not deny the bare fact of industrialization or even its effects in general. It is, after all, somewhat difficult to deny these after Russia has so drama-

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tically, and with such unexpected rapidity, broken the American monopoly of atomic power. It is only when the scope of industrialization and its specific social consequences come under discussion that the time-lag in the critics' thought becomes so embarrassingly apparent.

"Will Mr. Deutscher tell us precisely what was achieved there beyond rapid increases in the quantities of specific products?" asks, for instance, Mr. Tresse. Is it really necessary to point out that extremely rapid increases in vast quantities of important "products" (increases by which one of the most backward nations has become the world's second industrial power within the lifetime of a single generation) are bound to produce certain *qualitative* changes in the life of a country, its standard of living, its self-confidence, its attitude towards its own problems and the problems of the outside world? It might have been right to argue about the Russia of the 1930s in the manner in which my critic does it: then indeed the quantitative changes brought about by industrialization were not yet important enough to result in qualitative transformation. But the Russia of today is separated from that of twenty or thirty years ago by a gulf in many respects at least as wide as that which separated the United States, say, of 1930 from the States of 1830. Unless we take this fact as the starting point of analysis we are likely to get the perspective out of focus.

Mr. Tresse compares the Stalinist industrialization with the achievements of the "Westernizing Tsars" and concludes that "both the Westernizing Tsars and Stalinism equipped backwardness rather than did away with it." (Elsewhere he says that Stalinism has only made Russian backwardness dynamic.) Is Mr. Tresse merely playing with words or is he exhibiting a desperate mental resistance against absorbing the vastness of a new phenomenon? In comparison with Stalinist industrialization the work of the "Westernizing Tsars" represented only ephemeral and insignificant episodes. Those Tsars had indeed merely equipped Russian backwardness for certain limited, predominantly military, purposes of local or regional significance. Peter the Great could only break open a "window to Europe"; but he left the whole economic edifice of Russia more or less unaltered. Under Stalin that edifice was re-made to its foundations, prodigiously expanded and modernized, while its windows to the outside world were slammed, blocked and hermetically sealed. To "equip backwardness" on the scale on which Stalinism has done it means to do away with that backwardness or, at any rate, to produce the essential prerequisites for its abolition.

"Through its economic developments," the argument runs further, "Stalinism has armed the Russian state with an unprecedented power. But this is far from being matched by social gains for the people." Granted. I have argued with a certain emphasis that it is precisely this contradiction between Russia's new economic power and her low standards of living, between the new wealth of the nation and the old poverty of the people, that is at the root of the post-Stalin crisis. But together with the emergence of that crisis have also appeared the material means

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for its solution. By themselves these means are not enough; but without them no solution and no real "social gains" would be possible. The Russia of the 1930s, to go back no further, lacked the industrial resources necessary for a substantial and general rise of the standard of living, while the resources of post-Stalinist Russia are vast enough to sustain such a rise, to some extent even while the armament race is on. (It is interesting to find that this seems also to be the view of so orthodox an American economist as Professor J. K. Galbraith, who wrote in *The Reporter* of May 1953 that "Russian output is growing at a faster rate than our own" and that "both the Soviet Union and the United States may already be at or beyond the point where additional steel capacity can make a decisive contribution to war potential." In other words, according to Professor Galbraith, further expansion of the Soviet steel industry—and this applies to Soviet heavy industry at large—serves civilian, not military purposes. When it comes to open-minded study of the facts, some writers of the anti-Stalinist Left could still profitably learn a great deal from a good orthodox bourgeois economist.)

Mr. Coser writes:

> Now Mr. Deutscher claims that as Russian society increases its wealth and the general level of living also increases, the differential privileges may no longer be sought after as eagerly in the future. But is he really prepared to argue that the Russian national income will in the foreseeable future rise to such level of abundance that differential access to the pool of wealth will lose its importance? Surely, one cannot believe that so sophisticated an analyst can be *that* naive. If most of the goods in Russia were "free goods" as, say, water is in the Eastern part of the United States, no competitive struggle over it would be likely to arise, but does one seriously need to discuss this alternative?

It is distressing to find one's views so conveniently reduced by one's critic to an absurdity. Of course, I am not prepared to argue that the Russian national income will in the foreseeable future rise to such levels of abundance that "differential access to the pool of wealth" will lose its importance. But there may be—did it not occur to Mr. Coser?—some intermediate stages between the present low Soviet standard of living and that millennium in which "most of the goods in Russia are 'free goods' as, say, water is in the Eastern part of the United States." For example, Russia may reach a Western European standard of living in the near future, a prospect which is, incidentally, seriously discussed by many economists. But whatever the prospects, the last years have already brought an appreciable improvement. It may be advisable to take skeptically a recent statement by M. Z. Saburov, head of the State Planning Commission, that real wages and salaries were in 1954 seventy-four per cent higher than in 1940, and nearly 100 per cent higher if social services were included. But suppose the rise was only of the order of 40 - 50 per cent—this would still be a remarkable advance.

A rise in the standard of living does not imply that differential wages and salaries ("the differential access to the pool of wealth") will

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lose all their importance; but they are sure to lose part of it. Behind the wild, almost zoologically individualistic scramble for means of subsistence which characterized social relations in Stalinist Russia, a scramble to which Stalinism incited the people and which it hailed as "socialist competition," there loomed the grim and oppressive background of Russian poverty. Workers, peasants, bureaucrats, and the intelligentsia, and within each social class and group its individual members, fought tooth and nail for their "shares" in the national loaf; and the shares could not be but extremely "unfair" as long as the loaf was so small that it could not meet even the minimum needs of the vast majority. But with the growth of the national loaf the competition for "shares" does tend to become less savage and more civilized; the shares can at last become more "fair." The millennium of equality is far, very far off; but the gross inequality of the Stalin era is no longer rooted in an economic necessity as it had been. The awareness of this is taking hold of peoples' minds and impels them to react against the privileges of the few and the misery of the many.

In *Russia: What Next?* I ventured the forecast that the most important development of the post-Stalin era would be a new "cry for equality." That cry, still muffled and timid, is nevertheless quite unmistakably going up. It forces the ruling group to raise the output of articles of *mass*-consumption above all planned targets. It forces them to launch the drive against privileges illegitimately obtained and corruption in the bureaucracy itself. The cry can be heard in the protests of writers and poets, at the moment the most articulate section of Soviet society, against the demoralizing effects of the Stalin Prizes, and of the fantastically high fees and other favors enjoyed by the regime's minions and laureates. It can be heard in the new Soviet satire which has known some revival since Stalin's death and tends to become, as of old, a weapon of social criticism. Can one seriously doubt that behind these literary manifestations of a revulsion against Stalinist inequality there is a strong popular feeling which presses and weighs on practical politics?

I am told that in emphasizing the progressive implications of Russia's industrialization, I am "clinging" to "old-fashioned 19th century ideals and illusions." "THERE IS NO REASON TO ASSUME ANY KIND OF AUTOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN A HIGHER LEVEL OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND 'GENERAL CIVILIZATION.'" Mr. Coser impresses this on me with all the emphasis of a sentence printed in capital letters. "Such an equation of industrial and cultural advances, such an assumption that technological progress must necessarily bring—even if through a few detours of history—greater human progress seems to me to ignore much of the evidence of recent history."

Again, our controversy would have been much more fruitful if the critic had not—how should I put it?—so oversimplified my views. I have nowhere assumed any "automatic correspondence" between a higher level of industrial development and general cultural advance. The evidence of recent history shows indeed that nations which have

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reached a very high level of industrial development may plunge into barbarism, if their social and political consciousness and organization fail to keep pace with technological progress. "Old-fashioned" 19th century Marxism did not have to wait for the evidence of Nazism (or for that matter of McCarthyism) to see that. "Socialism or barbarism" —this was the alternative it had posed precisely before highly industrialized capitalist nations as early as in the middle of the 19th century when the alternative still sounded merely like a dramatic figure of speech. But the point is this: technological progress is not enough to secure social and cultural advance; but without it no such advance is possible. Man may master the blind forces of nature and still be a wretched slave to the blind forces of society. But as slave to his natural environment he cannot have even the faintest hope of ever being able to master his destiny in society.

Intellectuals in New York, London, or Paris, who would never dream of denying themselves in daily life any of the facilities which modern technology has placed at their disposal, may turn philosophically supercilious noses on the progressive implications of modern technology. But let them try to persuade the Indians or the Chinese that it is a matter of little cultural significance whether Indian, Russian, or Chinese villages—in these villages there still lives half of mankind—are lit by electric light; whether they have water and roads; whether they have enough doctors and medical supplies to fight disease and plague; whether they have fertilizers for their farms; and so, and so on. We are not arguing, I suppose, about the metaphysics of progress. We are not considering the somewhat elusive point whether the medieval craftsman, or the Chinese coolie, or the peasant of the *obshchina* was not in his way "happier" than is the modern industrial worker; or whether it would not be better for the salvation of the Russian peasant's soul that he should till his land with a wooden plough rather than with a tractor. In the world such as it is, such as it has been formed by industrial revolutions and centuries of capitalism, no social progress at all is possible for the overwhelming majority of mankind without rapid and massive technological and industrial development. Russia's industrialization by itself offers no positive guarantee of a rise in "general civilization," but it does offer a negative guarantee—it removes the decisive obstacle of industrial backwardness from the road of advance.

But what reason have I to assume, I am further asked, that industrialization and a higher standard of living may help Soviet society to free itself from the fetters of a totalitarian system and foster a democratic evolution? Once again, I assume no "automatic correspondence"; and I have repeatedly pointed out that a new brand of authoritarianism, perhaps some sort of a Bonapartist regime, may eventually replace Stalinism. But it is true that I have in my working hypothesis placed a greater emphasis on the prospect of Russia's departure from totalitarianism and of her gradual democratic evolution. I shall perhaps be excused if I confess that I do not seem to be able to follow Mr. Rabas-

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siere's otherwise interesting argument when he speaks about a third possibility, namely the development of a "totalitarian democracy." I fear that he is using political terms without considering their accepted meaning. Democracy, whether bourgeois or proletarian, is government by consent rather than by coercion; it implies a certain freedom of political controversy and criticism and a certain freedom of association. Totalitarianism, a denial of all these freedoms, is "monolithic" coercion. A totalitarian democracy seems to me a contradiction in terms—watery fire or white blackness.

To return to the main argument, there exists a certain (unautomatic, complex) correspondence between a nation's industrial wealth, standard of living, and the character of the political institutions under which it lives. A prolonged rise in standards of living, whether in capitalist or post-capitalist society, entails a mitigation of class struggles and a softening of social tensions, which makes it possible for rulers to rule by consent, and for society to use its freedoms of expression and association without splitting itself into uncompromisingly hostile camps. It is, after all, not an historic accident that the only countries in which bourgeois democratic regimes have remained more or less intact and stable over the lifetime of generations are the United States and Great Britain, the two countries with the greatest wealth and the highest standards of living. In all other Western nations bourgeois democratic regimes have been, as a rule, only interludes between dictatorships. I submit that an analogous interdependence between social wealth and the character of political institutions may manifest itself in post-capitalist society as well.

Totalitarianism can hardly be considered as merely a sinister manifestation of man's evil nature or of the evil nature of various ruling classes, or as the mysterious bursting of history's wrath upon our heads, as some writers of the anti-Stalinist Left are inclined to see it. What various ruling classes and groups have found in the totalitarian state is the all-embracing and hermetic instrument for the repression of cataclysmic social tensions. The nature and background of those tensions differ from country to country, and need to be analyzed specifically in their own contexts. In Russia those tensions sprang from the contrast between the promise of the new society made by the revolution and the inability of the revolutionary regime to fulfill the promise in conditions of inherited poverty and utter ruin and isolation. Stalinism prevented the main classes of Soviet society, the workers and the peasants, from pursuing their fundamental conflicts to the bitter end; and it prevented both classes from revolting against a bureaucracy which carved out for itself an extremely "unfair" share of the national income and ruthlessly levied from society the heaviest contributions towards "primitive socialist accumulation."

From "Primitive" to Normal "Socialist Accumulation"

Stalinism was, in Marxist terms, the political and ideological

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superstructure which corresponded to "primitive socialist accumulation." That accumulation had been started on an extremely low level of productive forces, a level at which the surplus of the national income was far too small to allow a sufficient rate of accumulation. Decisive contributions towards the fund of accumulation had to be derived from the wages of workers and the incomes of the collectivized peasantry. "Primitive socialist accumulation" (which to pre-Soviet Marxists, including Bolsheviks, would have sounded like a contradiction in terms*) was by its nature a violent attack upon the *immediate* economic interests of all social classes, an attack carried out by the State sponsoring the accumulation. Society could not be expected to submit willingly: it could not but resist the attack and oppose violence to violence. It had therefore to be deprived of all capacity for resistance and of all means for self-expression if primitive socialist accumulation, at the rates fixed under the successive plans, was to succeed.

Primitive socialist accumulation is now either coming to a close or has entered upon a very advanced stage. The accumulation loses or is about to lose its primitive character. The Soviet productive apparatus has grown vast enough to ensure continued large scale expansion from its own internal resources, from its own surplus product, without heavy contributions levied on wages and peasant incomes. The condition of the Soviet steel industry may be seen as both an illustration and an index of the general situation. With an annual output of 4-5 million tons that industry was not in a position to "finance" its own rapid expansion from its own resources. It could not, to put it in popular terms, rely for its growth on ploughing back its own profits. Its workers and the workers of other industries and the mass of the peasants were all heavily taxed in one form or another to "finance" the process. But with an annual output of 40 million tons the Soviet steel industry—and the same is true of Soviet industry at large—should be capable of continued and rapid development by means of self-expansion and "self-finance."**

The Soviet economy has reached, in other words, the stage of transition from *primitive* to *normal* accumulation. For its further progress industrialization does not need to resort to that depression of wages and to that plunder of the peasantry to which it had in such large measure owed its impetus during a quarter of a century. To be sure, the transition is by no means easy. The inertia of the economic and social habits of primitive accumulation is strong. Further expansion depends not only on an abundance of means of production; it also requires an enlargement of the industries which turn out means of consumption; and

* The conception is not of Stalinist origin, however;—it was first formulated and developed into a positive program by Trotsky and even more explicitly by E. Preobrazhensky, the most eminent of Soviet anti-Stalinist economists.

** I am using the terms "finance" and "self-finance" metaphorically only. The money aspect of accumulation has actually been of secondary importance. What I have in mind is that at the present high level of output the *real* surplus product is or is becoming sufficient for adequate "expanded reproduction."

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the relatively low productivity of farming may be an important limiting factor. But in its heavy industries the Soviet economy possesses the decisive levers for the overcoming of most of these difficulties.

At this momentous change-over from primitive to normal accumulation the Stalinist superstructure outlives its day, because the State's violent attack upon the immediate interests of all classes of society, the attack which has lasted a quarter of a century, relents and comes to a standstill; and the social tensions, which Stalinism could keep from exploding only by means of monolithic control, slacken and decline.

But—"by what means of analysis does Mr. Deutscher determine that at precisely *this* stage of Russian economic development Stalinism is rendered anachronistic?" I am, of course, *not* determining this by means of theoretical analysis only. A conflict between the structure and superstructure of society is likely to be a protracted process, running through diverse phases of acute crisis and slow movement; and no theoretical analysis can determine the point at which the conflict may come to the surface. All that analysis can do is to foreshadow the conflict, to investigate it when it materializes, and to consider the factors involved. Whether Stalinism is rendered anachronistic precisely at this stage is a matter not of abstract analysis but of empirical observation. I formulated my analysis some time before Stalin's death, but events have since increasingly borne it out; and the terms of many of my prognostications are already becoming the commonplaces and clichés of political commentators, even of those who at first described them as products of wishful thought. (Readers may compare, for instance, Mr. George Kennan's criticism of my *Russia: What Next?* with his latest views expressed in *Realities of American Foreign Policy*. In his criticism entitled "Did Stalin's Death Change Anything?" Mr. Kennan answered the question in the negative. In his latest work he says that the Russian regime is now evolving from Stalinism into a new and different phase just as it once evolved from Leninism to Stalinism.) That the present regime is breaking, or rather *sneaking*, away from Stalinism can be seen from a series of innovations in domestic and foreign affairs, innovations which I need hardly summarize here, even if some of my critics have not noticed them.

The next objection which calls for an answer is: "Mr. Deutscher does not seem to expect that a fundamental democratization of Russian society will come about through a political revolution, through mass-activity; . . . he expects the privileged minority, and he will pardon me if I put his expectations in a somewhat crude way, he expects the privileged minority to commit suicide, to abolish its own privileges." (I readily pardon my critic—but is the "somewhat crude way" really necessary?) "In fact there is no historical precedent known to this writer in which a ruling class has voluntarily given up its privileges, except under the extreme duress of actual or threatening revolutionary development."

It is a welcome change to be for once reminded of so "old-fashioned" a Marxist truism. As a rule, dominant classes do not indeed give up

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their privileges, except under "extreme duress" of revolution. But there are exceptions to every rule. History does record quite a few cases in which ruling or possessing classes gave up *some* privileges under the pressure of economic or social necessity, not of "revolutionary development." I have discussed one of these instances, the abolition of serfdom by Tsar Alexander II in 1861; and I have tried to show in what respect this precedent may be relevant to the present situation. The Russian landlords were induced by the Tsar, "the First Landlord of the Land," to give up the "privilege" of owning the peasantry as chattel slaves. They were not compelled to do so by civil war as the slave-owners of the Southern States were. They freed their serfs not under the threat of a revolution, with which no class of Russian society was then able to confront them, but in the interest of a modernization and rationalization of the Russian economy and of an incipient capitalism. British ruling groups extended the franchise to their working classes by slow degrees over many decades; and they did this in part under popular but not necessarily revolutionary pressure, and in part for the sake of general social efficiency. The same may be said of Bismarck's reforms in Germany. Neither the British ruling classes, nor the German Junkers, nor the Russian landlords "committed suicide." I do not see why we should rule out in advance the prospect that the needs for higher economic and social efficiency, to mention for the time being only these, may induce Soviet bureaucracy to give up some of its privileges, which is hardly the same as committing suicide. There are, on the contrary, some good reasons for considering this prospect very seriously.

I have admittedly left open the question how far that bureaucracy may go in promoting reforms. I do not know the answer to this question, and the answer cannot at present be obtained by means of any theoretical analysis—it can only be given by the balance of social forces, by the relative impacts of real pressures and counterpressures, and by unfolding events.

The Social Character of Soviet Bureaucracy

Soviet bureaucracy is a social phenomenon without precedent. We know about it too little to be able to gauge accurately its strength and outlook, the degree of its social unity, cohesiveness, and consolidation, or the extent to which it has or has not crystallized into a distinctive, self-centered, self-disciplined, self-conscious, and self-perpetuating social body. We do not even know what portion of the national income it appropriates—the Soviet ruling group conceals the information. The concealment indicates that it has a vested interest in keeping Soviet society unaware of the real cost to society of the "services" of the managerial groups. But the concealment also suggests that to Soviet bureaucracy itself its privileges appear illegitimate and ill-gotten, and that its social conscience is tormented to an extent to which the conscience of the bourgeoisie never was. The "managerial class" may not be inclined to commit suicide; but so far it has not even had the courage

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to announce its historic birth.

It is a truism, but one which may be usefully repeated, that Soviet bureaucracy derives its benefits and privileges and position in society only from its functions of management and administration performed in a publicly owned economy, not from any form of ownership of the means of production. The whole outlook of Soviet society has so far prevented the managerial elements from using their functions in order to establish themselves as a propertied class. Their privileges are economically confined to the sphere of consumption, a characteristic which cannot be found in any dominant class of the past, each of whom owed its supremacy to ownership of means of production (or of labor force) and was animated by a fervent and proudly proclaimed conviction of the sanctity of its property. What makes any possessing class in any type of society into an organic entity is the uniformity of the property relationship within which its members live and act *vis-á-vis* one another and *vis-á-vis* other classes. However divided against itself any class may be, its unity is inherent in the fixed and enduring framework of that relationship.

No such ties bind Soviet bureaucracy into a distinctive social entity. That bureaucracy has no private or sectional property relationship to defend. Its functions of management and command are in principle acquired by competence, skill, and political "loyalty" (whatever the tests by which these are defined); and they are therefore neither enduring, nor hereditary in the sense in which property was.* To be sure, the functions of management and command carry with them extraordinary benefits and privileges. But the basis of those benefits is extremely shaky and seems incapable of historic consolidation; and the importance of the benefits, and consequently the tenacity with which they may be defended, depends on the general background of social poverty or wealth. The bureaucracy was probably the only element in Soviet society which was exempt from carrying the economic burden of "primitive socialist accumulation" and free to profit by it. By the same token, the sharp contrast between managerial "prosperity" and general want is bound to be appreciably softened with the transition from primitive to normal accumulation.

The argument may perhaps be put in simpler terms: The bulk of the bureaucracy has enjoyed a standard of living well above that of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers and peasants, but hardly higher than the standard enjoyed by skilled Soviet workers, and certainly not higher than that of the lower middle classes in wealthier capitalist countries. The privileges of the vast majority of bureaucrats consist in their being able to feed, clothe, and house themselves and their dependents more or less adequately, to give higher education to their children, and so on. These were important privileges against a background of general want; but they cease to be privileges as adequate food, housing,

* The story of Stalin's son, Vassili, is a minor yet almost symbolic illustration.

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and education come within the reach of the majority. The main division of Stalinist society was not one between slum and mansion, but one which set the slum-dweller and barrack-dweller against the owner or user of a 3-4 roomed flat or of a small-sized house. As long as living in such a flat or house is an unrealizable dream to the average citizen, this social cleavage is and must remain very real indeed. But it cannot be solved by means of class struggle and expropriation as the conflicts between landlord and peasant and worker and capitalist were solved. Because the social antagonism is, in its economic aspect, wholly confined to the sphere of consumption, it can be mitigated and finally resolved only by a greater abundance of means of consumption.

As far as the vast majority of the bureaucracy is concerned (not, however, its upper-most stratum) it is not at all a requirement of social progress that they should "abdicate" their economic privileges. Progress would require not that the mass of the bureaucrats should be leveled down but that the mass of the workers should be leveled up and enjoy at least the still modest standard of living attained by the average bureaucrat; but this is no longer an economic impossibility. As the standards rise the bureaucrat will, of course, strive to get six or seven rooms for himself, and he will insist on getting them even before the worker obtains two or three. The competition for "differential access to the pool of wealth" will go on; but it may be expected to grow milder; and this is of some political consequence. It took the whole terror of the GPU to give the bureaucrat his "social security" in the midst of hungry, half-naked, and virtually homeless people. No such terror is needed to protect his "prosperity" from people rising above the borderlines of poverty. The bureaucrat himself who struggled with gruesome cruelty to get his three-roomed accommodation, that is, to satisfy a minimum need, is not likely to show the same sordid savageness in his striving to obtain six rooms and other marginal improvements of his living.

Thus, the privileges enjoyed by the vast majority of the bureaucracy have neither stability nor permanence; they are likely to lose some of their importance with the general rise in well-being; and they are not substantial enough to produce anything like a class antagonism or to impel the bulk of the bureaucracy to cling to the totalitarian terror as to the safeguard of privilege.

But what about that upper stratum whose members surely enjoy privileges and a standard of living comparable to those of the old Russian aristocracy, or of a Western financial oligarchy? Here indeed is the conundrum. It is difficult to answer this question, because we are not in a position to measure the scope and the social significance of the privileges usurped by the upper stratum. In the early phases of primitive socialist accumulation the upkeep of the Stalinist oligarchy represented probably a considerable *faux frais* in the general balance of national expenditure; but it seems to me doubtful whether this can amount now to more than a marginal item of "wasteful consumption."

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I may be mistaken about this—unfortunately, the relevant data are not available. But even if those privileges are much larger than I am inclined to assume, they do not form ties of solidarity between the beneficiaries even remotely as solid as those that are formed by a property relationship, consolidated and consecrated by age-old tradition and fetishism.

Mr. Coser reminds me that "Marx once observed that if open access to privileged position would be the only test for the degree of democratization of a society, the Society of Jesus would have to be considered a most democratic institution. In other words, even if it should be proved that there still exists free access to top positions in Soviet society this would in no way prove its democratic character."

What relevance has this to our controversy? I have nowhere used the argument about "free access to the top positions in Soviet society"; and I certainly do not consider Soviet bureaucracy "a most democratic institution." I am nevertheless grateful to the critic for having brought in this point, because it may help to make my argument clearer. Can one imagine a fully-fledged class society without landlords or capitalist entrepreneurs but only with the Society of Jesus as its dominant class? The Society of Jesus, or for that matter the Catholic clergy at large, does not represent a social class based on any specific property relationship. The social predominance of the Church was part of the feudal order. With the transition to capitalism that predominance lapsed; the Counter-Reformation and the Society of Jesus strove to hold the ground against Protestantism by adapting Catholicism to the needs and the mentality of a rising middle class. The clergy played the roles which it did play only within definite social settings formed by the property relationships of the basic social classes, of whom it was not one (except when the Church itself was a feudal landowner, and a section of the clergy was integrated with the landlord class, and acted as its brain and conscience and mouthpiece). The Society of Jesus is certainly not a democratic institution; but, even together with all the other Catholic orders, it could never create around itself and its interests any distinctive social order in the sense in which the feudal landlords and the bourgeoisie did. If Soviet bureaucracy is to be compared with the Society of Jesus, then the question must be asked: is it any more capable than the Jesuitic order would have been of forming a new type of a class society, solely on the basis of the defense of its own privileges, without any propertied class in the background?

A hierarchical organization of society is not the same as a class structure growing out of a definite form of ownership of means of production. Such a hierarchical organization without a corresponding property relationship is a spongy, protoplasmic growth, lacking social backbone, fluid and protean, incapable of historic consolidation. Despite all the despotic control which Soviet bureaucracy has exercised over society for several decades, it still seems to me to be sociologically not more than a giant amoeba.

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The basic forces of Soviet society are still the working class and the peasantry; and it is still as the mouthpiece of the one or the other or as the absolutist arbiter over both that bureaucracy exercises its supremacy. How much of that supremacy it can preserve and how much it may yield in the long and in the short run seems to me to depend primarily on the attitude of the basic classes, the state of their political consciousness and organization and their political energy or apathy.

"Precisely," says the critic, "the crucial fact about industrialization in Russia is precisely that it has been accomplished at the price of a complete elimination of Socialist organization. The socialist tradition is practically non-existent in Russia today since the great bulk of the Russian working class, peasants only ten or twenty years ago, has never been allowed to come into contact with it. To the mass of Russian workers socialism simply means the present regime. They are culturally more isolated, more incapable of acquiring political knowledge, more incapable of learning about the socialist tradition than were the Russian workers at the turn of the century."

This is a sweeping generalization composed of half-truths. It is true that the Russian working class is now less capable of independent organization and action than it was at the turn of the century. This, incidentally, is *not* the price it has paid for industrialization. It had lost its capacity for independent organization, and all such organization had been eliminated by the Bolsheviks, almost a decade before Stalin's industrial drive. It was in the revolution and the civil war that the Russian working class had spent its energy and exhausted itself as a social force. Its exhaustion led directly to the ascendancy of the bureaucracy: it was primarily because of the post-revolutionary torpor of Soviet society that the huge amoeboid growth acquired its stranglehold. Having secured its ascendancy, the bureaucracy then did all it could to keep the working class, as all other classes, in a state of political impotence; and it was assisted in this by the fact that "the great bulk of the Russian working class" were "peasants only ten or twenty years ago," lacking in social consciousness and absorbed in quasi-zoological competition for scarce means of subsistence. In this respect socialism has really been thrown back in Russia a long, a very long way.

But does this justify the critic's description of the present state of affairs and his pessimistic conclusion? Frederick Engels once wrote about the United States:

> The Americans may strain and struggle as much as they like, but they cannot discount their future—colossally great as it is—all at once like a bill of exchange: they must wait for the date on which it falls due; and just because their future is so great, their present must occupy itself mainly with preparatory work for the future, and this work, as in every young country, is of a predominantly material nature and involves a certain backwardness of thought . . .

In a different context these words can *a fortiori* be applied to the

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Soviet Union which has been so engrossed in its material progress that it has paid for it with a "certain backwardness of thought." But once a definite stage of material progress is reached, the advance of thought is sure to begin anew with unprecedented vigor and on a higher level than ever. Even the backwardness is relative only. It is not true that "the socialist tradition is practically non-existent in Russia today," or that the Russian working class has not been "allowed to come into contact with it." Willy-nilly, Stalinism itself persistently instilled essential elements of that tradition into the mind of the working class, although it did so in its own ecclesiastical-bureaucratic manner. (In the Soviet educational curriculum the socialist tradition, after all, still looms larger than in any school curriculum in the world.) But what has instilled that tradition even more effectively than any *Agitprop* or any educational curriculum is the "propaganda" exercised by the mere existence and continuous expansion of a publicly-owned and planned economy, which forms the habits of life of immense masses of people. No matter what the Russian worker thinks of Stalinism, or of the present ambiguous sequel to it, he has grown to take for granted public ownership of the means of production, and to look upon private ownership as upon a relic of a dark past to which the West seems to cling for unaccountable reasons. It is true that the Russian workers show no sign of that magnificent revolutionary spontaneity with which their grandfathers voiced their social protest and joined clandestine Social Democratic circles half a century ago. Yet, apathetic and inarticulate as the Soviet working class may still be, its mentality is in a sense more deeply permeated with socialism than was that of its revolutionary forebears. The belief that the future of society lies in freeing itself from the scourges of property and in common ownership is now rooted in its thinking with all the strength of a popular prejudice almost comparable to the American belief in "private enterprise";—and in this lies a triumph of socialism.*

It is futile to argue about social consciousness in general, for there are various degrees and types of consciousness. The political awareness of an élite of workers and intellectuals such as was fostered in Russia by the early Marxist propaganda does not exist there today. One sheet of Plekhanov's and Lenin's *Iskra* contained more of that type of awareness than can be found in the whole political literature of the Stalin era. But whether or not a political and literary élite expounds sophisticated ideas is not the only test, important though it is, by which the social consciousness of a nation is judged. The ideas advocated by the Marxist élite half a century ago have since become, in vulgarized form, the property of many millions. Vulgarization of complex ideas is regrettable; but it has so far been the characteristic accompaniment of any cultural advance of the masses; and only such a broad advance

* It is enough to talk even with recent refugees from the Soviet Union to realize this. None of the younger refugees will accept otherwise than with utter horror any suggestion of a restoration in Russia of private ownership of the means of production.

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creates a solid and enduring background for the growth, at the next stage, of social consciousness in depth.

"To the mass of Russian workers socialism simply means the present regime." Does it? Why then does the present ruling group go out of its way to create at least the impression that it is bent on reforming and improving the regime? A characteristic phrase which crops up more and more often in Soviet writings is that the work of various Soviet organizations "is not up to the demands of the rising social awareness of the masses." This is probably more than a ritualistic cliché: such words seem to reflect an uneasy feeling in the ruling group itself that to the mass of workers socialism does mean something more and something better than the present regime.

To sum up: My critics seem to me, on the one hand, to exaggerate the bureaucracy's intrinsic social strength and its ability to obstruct Russia's progress and, on the other, to underrate the potential capacity of Soviet society for higher forms of consciousness and independent action. It is on the balance of these factors that the future of the Soviet Union depends: the direction and the tempo of its development, and the question whether reform or revolution (or counterrevolution?) will eventually do away with the totalitarian system. The balance is imponderable. So far we have seen a number of changes and reforms from above, and little or no indication of a revolutionary development.

Yet the same critics who believe that to the mass of Russian workers "socialism simply means the present regime" hold it against me that I do not "expect that a fundamental democratization of Russian society will come about through a political revolution, through mass activity" and that I "count most of all on a reform from above." How revolution from below is possible while the masses allegedly lack all social consciousness is my critics' secret. As to myself, I think that the reforms from above can only initiate, but not complete, Russia's socialist democratization; and that they can do so only to the extent to which they stimulate the growth and the expression of a new social consciousness and political action "from below." However, I am not convinced that that action will necessarily take on revolutionary forms.

* * *

Now it is my turn to ask the critics to pardon me if I say that the passion with which they argue for revolution in Russia is to me somewhat amusing. They seem to have inherited the passion for a revolution in Russia, though little else besides, from Trotsky who could not help being deeply and personally involved in the Soviet struggle. Yet it is not on our prognostications that the course of events in Russia depends. Russian history will go its way without taking any notice of whether we in London or New York favor reform or revolution in Moscow. When Mr. Willen accuses me that I display the "utmost callousness" to the fate of 800 million people suffering under a "historic necessity," which I am supposed to defend, I can only wonder

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LETTER FROM ALGERIA

Edouard Roditi

When Lord Acton declared that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, he may not have been thinking of the slave economy of 18th-century plantations, nor of the kind of peonage that much of 19th-century colonialism still implied. But his statement explains very well the kind of absolute confusion and corruption that one still encounters at every step in areas like French North Africa, which have inherited the inescapable tangle of injustices, hatreds and resentments which slavery and peonage continue to breed long after they have been officially abolished.

Not that French colonial administration in North Africa has been any more despotic or corrupt than in other areas of the French Union, or than those of other colonial powers. On the contrary, the French have been remarkably liberal; they were inspired, even in the early stages of their colonial administration but especially after 1870, by generous 18th- and 19th-century notions of civilization and democracy as goals towards which the colonial peoples whose tutors they had chosen to become must still be educated. The French have been conscious of the human and political rights of the less advanced peoples, even if they have flouted these rights when they conflicted too overtly with certain French interests.

The French have been established in Algeria since 1830, in Tunisia since 1881, in Morocco since 1912. A thousand years of common economic and cultural history, under Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans and Byzantines, had already bound these areas closely to the Northern shores of the Mediterranean, long before the Iron Curtain of Islam cut them off from the Christian world. Even after the Mohammedan Conquest of North Africa, relations between the Maghreb and Spain continued to be close as long as the Arabs were still in the Iberian peninsula; after that, an uninterrupted series of wars and expeditions of all sorts, ranging from piracy and the repression of piracy to normal trade relations, kept Algiers and the coastal cities of Barbary in close contact with other areas of the Christian Mediterranean.

The native population of the Northern coasts of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia was thus, in spite of the Asian veneer of Islam, in most respects as Mediterranean, by 1830, as that of Spain or Sicily, lands that had also experienced several centuries of Arab occupation. Though the slave trade had brought to the Barbary Coast a considerable number of Negro slaves from the Saharan oases and the Sudan, North Africa was still bound by closer ties to Europe, beyond the sea, than to Africa proper, beyond the

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less hospitable desert. The Europeanization of North Africa therefore presented to the French a problem that was far less fraught with potential trauma than the cultural assimilation of the West African "slaves" imported some two hundred years ago into Brazil or the southern states of the U.S.A.

But this Europeanization has been rendered more hazardous by inequalities in the political status of the various administrative areas affected. Algeria remained for a long time an outright colony, whereas Tunisia and Morocco have always been Protectorates, still theoretically enjoying a kind of dormant sovereignty of their own. The different political history and economic evolution of each of these territories has, moreover, led to the adoption, in each, of a number of peculiar expedients and compromises that serve to increase, in the long run, the basic differences of status. Since 1945, Algeria proper has become, at least in theory, a part of the same political unit as Continental France, a politically and economically underprivileged Corsica. Tunisia hovers on the brink of the same kind of national sovereignty as Egypt and Iraq have already been able to wrest from the British. In Morocco, the political ineptitude of French politicians and administrators threatens to create a situation almost as hopeless as in Indochina. In the military territories of Saharan Southern Algeria, all sands and oases, a kind of demographic and political vacuum subsists, a Happy Hunting Ground for swashbuckling military adventurers with a dash of Lawrence of Arabia or of Lady Hester Stanhope in their sometimes ambivalent personalities. The frontiers that divide these various territories from each other and from Spanish Morocco, the International Zones of Tangier and Tripoli, are moreover quite artificial and correspond to no real economic, linguistic or ethnic differences.

Though events in Tunisia and Morocco have, in recent years, tended to distract "informed public opinion" from any potential troubles in Algeria, the actual political and economic situation in this former colony, where there are no armed partisans attacking French farms as in Tunisia and no political assassinations in reprisal for the arrest of Mohammedan leaders as in Morocco, is perhaps more desperate and, in the long run, less predictable than in either Protectorate. Any defeatist can already predict the worst that is likely to happen in the Protectorates: after a number of appeals made to the United Nations by member-states of the Arab League and hastily seconded by Argentina and the United States in a rush to get in ahead of the USSR, the French might be forced to relinquish their hold over Tunisia and Morocco even faster than they are now being forced to withdraw from Indochina. But Algeria has no lost sovereignty of its own to regain: just as Puerto Rico is part of the territory of the United States, Algeria is legally a part of France. French misdeeds in Algeria are therefore officially no concern of other members of the United Nations.

One hundred and twenty years of colonial history have managed to depersonalize Algeria's native Mohammedan population until, though dissatisfied with its present status, it no longer knows very clearly what it

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wants and remains, at least for the time being, more perplexed and purposeless than the Nationalists of Tunisia and Morocco. It has been estimated that the present population of Algeria is more than five times what it was numerically in 1830, at the time of the French conquest. In addition to a million European settlers and their descendants, a figure which now includes also the native North African Jews and a large number of offspring of mixed marriages of all sorts, Algeria has over eight million Mohammedans, as compared with a bare two million Jews and Mohammedans one hundred years ago. This total population continues to increase.

I met, in Kabylia, the Europeanized Berber principal of a local elementary school, a man who writes and publishes regionalistic novels in French and already enjoys quite a reputation as a literary figure in Paris. Unlike Jean Giono, Marcel Jouhandeau and other famous French regionalists, Mouloud Feraoun already has seven children but has published only two books; an American writer of his status would probably produce a book every two years and a child every five, a Frenchman a book a year and no children at all. Families of ten children are not unusual.

Nor is this huge increase of Algeria's population the direct result of a French policy of encouraging the systematic breeding of cannon-fodder. True, the names of the seriously wounded prisoners who were released by the Viet Minh after the fall of Dien Bien Phu revealed a high percentage of North African Mohammedans; but this only illustrates the French government's suspicions about the loyalty of the Communist-infiltrated and pacifist youth of metropolitan France. Populations are expanding throughout the Islamic world, as indeed they are in all colonial or semi-colonial areas where sex is still considered cheaper and more fun than Hollywood movies and where modern hygiene has only recently been taught to expectant mothers. More devout than many Christians, the Mohammedans are as averse to birth control as Italians or Spaniards.

THE EXPANSION OF THE ECONOMY of Algeria has failed signally to keep up with the country's general increase of population. As early as 1840, French colonists were busy draining swamps in the coastal area. The Lycanthropist poet Petrus Borel, a precursor of Baudelaire and Rimbaud and Hart Crane and Kenneth Patchen, died of sun-stroke suffered while working in his fields in Mostaganem. Huge citrus groves, especially around Orléansville and Boufarik and in the plain of the Mitidja, enormous vineyards that produce more wine than all of France can ever consume or export, now remind the traveler of Southern California, Florida or the Corpus Christi area in Texas. Immediately west of Algiers, there are miles of tomato plantations along a rocky coast picturesque enough for the same kind of resort developments as the Rivieras of Italy and France. But these are all export crops that employ only seasonal labor and contribute little to the diet of the millions of undernourished Algerian Mohammedans. In 1945, an insufficient harvest of subsistence crops in the foothills caused a famine, while the plains still produced huge quantities of wine that no devout Mohammedan is allowed to drink.

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Three million hectares of forests have been cleared, since the conquest of Algeria, in the arid mountains where the Arab farmers who once owned the land of the richer plains have now withdrawn. When the French authorities first demanded proof of ownership of the land, the Mohammedans were not able to produce deeds that could be considered valid in terms of French law; and the French had not yet understood that Koranic law never grants an individual the same kind of outright ownership of the land as French law. The French were thus able to expropriate the Mohammedan farmers wherever the land seemed interesting enough for them to raise the question of ownership. Two million three hundred thousand Mohammedans are now actively employed in Algeria, two million of them only seasonally. Only one out of every eight Mohammedans, on an average, is bringing home pay, though one out of every six of the total population of Algeria is employed, most of the six hundred thousand employed Europeans having steady jobs.

East of Algiers, a factory area is now being developed beyond the huge harbor. In the Saharan South, around Colomb Béchar, coal deposits are already exploited, and iron ore is mined in several other areas. But no steel industry has yet been developed in Algeria, which exports its ore and imports all its metals and machines, even exporting much of the labor that transforms this ore in metropolitan France, where over three hundred thousand Algerian workers are now employed, many of them in the factories of such key industrial areas as the North, the Paris area, Saint-Etienne and Marseilles. These Algerians emigrate to France much as the starved workers of France were once driven, under the Nazi occupation of their country, to seek work in the industries of Germany, and often live in France in conditions that are no better than those of the slave laborers of the Third Reich.

Speculative and industrialized agriculture, concentrating its efforts on a few valuable export crops, provides employment to this huge and expanding Algerian labor reserve only on a seasonal basis, whether in the fields or in packing and processing plants. Only a steady, rational and subsidized expansion of Algerian industry, to the detriment of some of the export industries of metropolitan France, might now train and absorb these many willing but unskilled workers, all clamoring for jobs, salaries and food. Over a million North African migratory workers have, since 1945, tried their luck in France, over 90 per cent of them coming from Algeria. Though most of them return to their native farms as soon as they have earned enough to repay the mortgages that helped to finance their trip, there are now close to 500,000 Mohammedans living in France, including the 300,000 who are employed in industry. Considerable numbers of them are beginning to filter into Belgium, the Saar and West Germany. Algerian unemployment has ceased to be an African problem and is beginning to threaten all of Western European organized labor with an expanding manpower reserve that is driven by hunger and desperation to undercut any agreed minimum wage and accept whatever it is offered. In the proposed integration of Western Europe, a common labor pool must

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indeed be a corollary of a common pool of steel and coal, and also of a common Western European army; in this manpower pool, Algeria is a richer reserve than Italy.

Serious-minded Europeans and Mohammedans have begun, in Algiers and metropolitan France, to organize groups for study and discussion of the problems that this situation creates. Though no practical solutions are yet proposed for immediate legislative action, more and more Frenchmen are beginning to realize that France must soon formulate a North African policy that will take into consideration the real needs of the Maghreb. As a solution to Algeria's demographic problem, Catholics and Mohammedans seem to agree in rejecting mere birth-control, and the Communists have not yet dared to propose openly a remedy so alien to the fundamental Islamic belief that children are a blessing of Allah. For the problem of Algeria's under-employment, many solutions have been suggested, ranging from an agrarian reform that would break up the great industrial estates of the wealthy colonists and restore part of the rich plains to the Mohammedan subsistence farmers, to a vast program of vocational training and industrial expansion which would both prepare the population for new jobs and create these jobs. But huge loans are required for any program as revolutionary and humane as all those now proposed, and every necessary reform already meets with the bitter opposition of well entrenched vested interests that are powerfully represented in Paris.

Still, some drastic reforms are immediately necessary, if France is destined to remain in North Africa and if North Africa is to be saved from the kind of economic and political frustration that can only lead to violence and chaos. With 4 per cent of its population under nineteen years of age and 12 per cent of its able-bodied Mohammedan males now driven to seek work in the alien industrial slums of housing-starved France, Algeria now has 35 times as many Mohammedan farmers subsisting as best they can on a mere three and a half times as much farmland as its European colonists occupy in the more fertile plains. The highlands of Kabylia, with their tiny steep fields and orchards where the farmers plough beneath the fig-trees in perspectives as fantastic as those of a Chagall landscape so that the ox seems to be building a nest in the tree, must feed two hundred and fifty souls, on an average, per square kilometer. From the desert South, the starving nomads stream northwards, all anxious to find jobs. In the crowded Casbah of Algiers, those whom we view as destitute slum-dwellers already believe themselves to be a relatively privileged middle-class: the truly poor huddle outside the city limits in shanty-towns of reed-built huts, in kennel-like contraptions built of rotting old packing-cases, beneath a roof of rusty old U. S. Army tomato catsup cans.

We live in an age of highly publicized pathos, and it has not yet become fashionable for the guilt-ridden American middle class to shed crocodile tears over the poverty and hunger of colonial Islam. Perhaps we should airlift a few joy-riding foreign correspondents to Algeria before it is too late, because the West is so signally failing there in its self-proclaimed mission of freeing the world from hunger, poverty and fear.

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A REPORT ON ASIAN SOCIALISM

Sidney Lens

Socialism in Asia emerged after, rather than before, Communism. The fact may seem trivial, but it has a decided significance. For while Communism was a transplantation from Europe, carefully nurtured by Lenin, Socialism evolved as part of the normal process of national revolution. That is not to say that the transplantation was then unnecessary or undesirable, yet Communism *was* transplanted and socialism not. Thus where the Communist parties in Asia are three decades old, independent Socialist parties are, for the most part, less than a decade old, and where Communism is pro-Moscow, Socialism is essentially "Third Forcist."*

Lenin, with his un-doctrinaire astuteness, clearly understood the value of a Communist movement in Asia. In the traditional Marxian blueprint the revolution was to come first in the advanced capitalist countries like Britain, America, Germany, where the forces of production were already far advanced and presumably could glide easily into Socialism. But the Marxian time-table was decidedly in error. The revolution came first to a country in the twilight zone between feudalism and capitalism, to an underdeveloped area where the order of business was clearly the national, rather than the socialist, revolution. And Lenin, having led such a combined revolution in Russia, was keenly aware of its potential in Asia.

Asians flocked to the Third International; they were welcomed and sent home to build the kind of movement the Second International had long neglected. M. N. Roy in India and Ch'en Tu-hsui in China fashioned Communist Parties in the image of Lenin. Subsequently these men quit or were removed from Party leadership. Others took over where they had left off, aided by Stalin rather than Lenin. Thus Stalinism, with its sustenance from abroad—both moral and material—became a force in Asia second only to nationalism. It led parties and revolutions, while Socialism remained merely a wing of the nationalist movement, an embryo waiting for the national revolution to triumph before it could be born.

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* I use the term "third force" throughout, not in the sense of another, third, power bloc, but as a third social and political group. It is synonymous in this context with what is often referred to as a "third camp," but I did not adopt the latter term only because the "camp" is not yet truly organized; it is a "force" *aspiring* to be an organized and significant world grouping—camp.

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Socialism in Asia came into being at the propitious historical moment, during the last decade, when the hold of imperialism had been weakened, when independence was in the offing, when the united bloc of bourgeois, peasant, worker and intellectual which had worked for independence now had to look to new horizons—and new schisms. Socialism emerged without any outside help, particularly without help from European Socialism. Both its origin and *raison d'être* were different from those of Stalinism on the one hand and nationalism on the other; hence its outlook and perspectives vary considerably from those of either the British Labor Party or Nenni's party in Italy. History and circumstance have conspired to make Asiatic Socialism a Third Force, and third forcism—the effort to find a path between capitalism and Stalinism—is in fact its underlying motif.

Until only a few years ago the Socialists in India were part of the Gandhian Congress. Only when nationalism achieved its goal of independence, or was on the verge of doing so, did Socialism assert its political independence. It is a tribute to the insight of Mahatma Gandhi that he understood this inexorable process and before his death urged that the Congress Party be dissolved and that each of its component forces—including the Socialists—then be free to form their own parties. Gandhi's advice was not heeded by Nehru but events forced a schism between nationalism and Socialism nonetheless. That schism is not sharp or thorough, in fact there is a considerable overlapping. I once asked the Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Kashani, what was his political credo, and he answered without hesitation that he was a Socialist. But as if to prove my point he hastily added "I am the George Washington of Iran." Nationalism and Socialism were for him an inevitable combination . The same is true in countries like Iraq or Lebanon or Egypt. In Iraq there is a left Socialist party led by Jaderjy, which also considers itself "nationalist," and a nationalist party which considers itself "Socialist."

In the low state of the Asian revolution this intermingling of philosophies is not hard to understand. So long as the national revolution is not completed, Socialism and nationalism will go together, and many of the members of one—perhaps most—will consider themselves supporters of the other. But time is widening this gap and will continue to do so. After independence comes the task of economic development: here the lines branch off. And here Asian Socialism finds the basis for its "peculiar" political role as a Third Force. It is no accident that the Rangoon Socialist Conference is loath to join forces with European Socialists of the Second International.

A host of historical circumstances makes this so. In outlook, age, vigor, and principle the socialist movements of each half of the world differ sharply. They confront different enemies and different historical tasks. Europe is capitalist, highly developed. There Socialism is old and moderate, concentrating more on welfarism than basic structural changes. But Asia is feudal, painfully underdeveloped. Here Social-

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ism demands basic structural changes in social life. Asia is too poor to be able to afford welfarism; it has a long long way to go before it reaches this stage.

Asian Socialism is not the Socialism of Marx, because all his life Marx concerned himself primarily with the evils of capitalism; and the neglected continent, despite its imperialist trimmings, is a sluggish mass of feudalism. It is not the Communism of Lenin or Trotsky; and certainly not of Stalin. On the other hand it is neither anti-Marx, nor anti-Trotsky; and in most places it started—although didn't finish—on quite friendly terms with Stalinism. It is a Socialism exposed to new problems, searching for new beginnings. It is a Socialism which must be international because of its economic dependence on the rest of the world; a Socialism which recognizes the overriding necessity for peace if it is to compress a few centuries into a few decades in its attempt to bridge the gap between western industrialism and its own underdevelopment.

ASIATIC SOCIALISM IS CONFRONTED with two main tasks:—first, to achieve independence; second, to develop the economy so that the pathetic living standards can be quickly raised.

But simple as these tasks sound they pose enormous difficulties. For instance, how shall Socialism achieve national independence without simultaneously pushing the Communists into power? The ruling classes of Asia, the sheikhs, pashas, effendi, zamindars, rajas and other assorted members of the landlord class, are corrupt, helpless, and hopeless. For more than a hundred years these forces have been buttressed by imperialism. Left to its own devices feudalism in Asia would have disintegrated perhaps a century ago. But the heavy hand of the European powers halted that development, strengthened the feudal classes of Asia and Africa and doomed the backward continents to further backwardness. The history of the 19th century is replete with national revolutions in China, Egypt, Iran, India and elsewhere which the western powers were seemingly trying to help but which always ended in the reinvestment of the feudal forces—only this time with the stronger military backing of Britain, France, Holland, sometimes America. Imperialism saved Asian feudalism: of that there can be no doubt. In turn feudalism preserved the profits of imperialism.

But now that this partnership is coming to an end, where shall Asian nationalism, with its Socialist allies, turn? So long as western powers—as in Indo-China or Iran—insist on resisting nationalism, the only seemingly powerful ally on a world scale is Russia. Like it or not, unless and until the West joins the Asian revolution wholeheartedly and without reservation, nationalism and Socialism in Asia must inevitably cope with the magnetic attraction of Stalinism. The Kremlin lays down no conditions in the fight against feudalism: it is for its complete, immediate, and thorough destruction. Hence unsophisticated nationalists turn easily in its direction. If it were not for the sour experiences

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that the Indian Socialists had with Stalinism prior to and during the war, Stalinism would be an even greater polarizing force. So long as the West refuses to aid genuine national revolutions it forces the leftist groups in Asia either to turn to Moscow or act as a Third Force. Today Asian Socialism prefers the latter. But unlike pro-Western or pro-Soviet movements, it lacks the meat and marrow of a powerful state behind it. Burma is the only real Socialist state in Asia, but Burma is a small nation of 17 million people, harassed by continuing civil war and trying desperately to complete its 8-year plan.

The problem of independence therefore soon resolves itself for Asian Socialism into a two-sided or three-sided fight. On the one hand it has to fight both its own feudal classes and the imperialist powers which help those feudal classes, and on the other it has to resist the natural attractiveness of Communist China which has succeeded in destroying feudalism. Mao and his group are traveling the Stalinist path as far as industrialization is concerned and will undoubtedly—unless they change the present course—sacrifice more people in behalf of rapid industrialization than even Stalin. But for the average Asian they have performed a worthwhile task in liquidating Chinese feudalism and it will be years, perhaps decades, before Asia fully understands the other side of Chinese Stalinism—its totalitarian character. After all, it took several decades for westerners to understand a similar phenomenon in Russia. Thus independent socialism in Asia faces no simple task; it is ceaselessly warding off the blows of both power blocs, seemingly floating in mid-air without any moorings—a Third Force that is third but not very forceful.

Without help from the outside, Socialism faces an overwhelming job in seeking full independence. Consider, for instance, the plight of Socialists in Iran. Until the turn of the century Iran was a satellite of Czarist Russia. Later the British, under the guise of aiding a national revolution, put their foot in the door and eventually replaced Russia as the dominant power. But during World War II Britain had to divide the country with Soviet Russia for certain strategic reasons. Both powers actually occupied the country. Britain coasted along with its old imperialist tactics, while Russia quietly built up its Tudeh—Masses—Party. Tudeh stirred the peasants who wanted land, the intellectuals who had watched their country robbed of the fruits of Abadan's oil, the workers who lived abysmally. Tudeh shouted for independence, it cursed the British, and hit a resonant chord.

At this juncture a militant nationalist named Mossadegh took the reigns of government, expropriated the British oil interests and captured the imagination of the Iranian people. Opposed to both the Communists and the British, Mossadegh had no choice but to play all ends against the middle. He accepted Stalinist support when threatened from the right—the Shah and his feudal coterie—but always insisted on a non-Stalinist government, always kept the Communists in a limited position carefully circumscribed by what he thought was a reliable army.

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Had he received support from America he could have defeated both feudalism and Stalinism. But Britain, with American collaboration, maneuvered the feudal forces back into power. Nationalism, which had sought American support and had been pushed by the logic of events into a Third Force role, was eventually defeated. When Mossadegh banished the Shah, the Stalinists used this as a pretext to build their own force. They called demonstrations in support of Mossadegh. But the old man, opposed to feudalism, did not want to replace it with Stalinism. He called the army out, but it refused to obey his will; its officers had already made a deal with the West. Nationalism was defeated and Iran remains a colony in all but name.

Socialism in Iran is thus caught in the meat-grinder of the power struggle, hindered in its nationalist goal by the machinations of the oil empires, fearful of a Stalinist revolution that will substitute for a true national-socialist one. There are several Socialist groups in Iran: the Iran Party, the religious Socialists, Khalil Maleki's Third Force and others. Of these Khalil Maleki's group has the most promise. Maleki himself is an ex-Stalinist who knows what the problem is, but he lacks the resources to challenge the Communists for the allegiance of the masses. Where the Communists receive millions from outside, Maleki has to scrounge for pennies.

In the long run this problem will perhaps be solved. But assuming that the Asiatic world will soon secure true independence, there still remains the second task: how to develop an underdeveloped country? Superficially it sounds simple; you send in money, technicians, supplies and there you are. Americans picture the industrialization of Asia in terms of American industrialization. But consider a country like India. It has 550,000 villages, most of them inaccessible in the rainy season even by jeep. Seventy per cent of the population lives on the land, with approximately one acre per person. Total national income for the country is only $19 billion annually—about $50 per person, a dollar a week. If the country saves 5 per cent of its income annually—about a billion dollars—and invests it in industry it hardly makes a dent in the problem. To industrialize in the American manner, or the Russian, would mean to mechanize the farms, build thousands of factories, transfer the surplus farm population to the cities.

But such things are impossible in India, or China, or other Asian countries—without an enormous cost in human lives. There are some 90 million Indians unemployed or under-employed. It takes some $2,500 in machinery to keep a worker employed in a modern light industry factory; two or three times that much in a heavy industry factory like steel. If you were to move just ten million peasants to the cities that would require an investment in factories of about $25 billion—which happens to be just 25 years of the total savings of the Indian nation. And ten million hardly makes a dent in the unemployed or underemployed. Furthermore, if you were to move machinery into the farm areas you would probably be cutting down the yield of grain. Western-

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ers forget that machine farming is more productive only in terms of *man-hours of labor.* If you have plenty of land available a man-hour of labor, using a tractor, will produce many times as much as a man-hour of labor with hand tools. But machine farming is less productive *per acre of farm.* A skilled Japanese farmer, using hand labor, can produce more rice per acre of land than an American farmer with his tractor. Large-scale machine farming is feasible only where there is a surplus of land. In India or in China there is no such surplus. All of India, for instance, has only 424 million usable acres of land—in a nation of some 363 million people. And of that only two-thirds is actually cultivated. Even if the amount could be tripled by reclamation and irrigation it would still be only three or four acres per person, or perhaps ten or fifteen per family—hardly enough for machine farming.

The solution to the problem of industrialization in underdeveloped countries is definitely not a simple one. There are some nations which have a surplus of land, like Burma. But they lack capital. That capital must be gained by export of grain or by exploitation of natural resources. If the people are made to eat less so that exports can rise they will be resentful and fight back. That is precisely what happens in the Communist countries, where the rate of development is far beyond the natural abilities of the nation and where the emphasis is on non-consumer goods rather than consumer goods. For Asiatic Socialism the problem of *democratic* industrialization is uppermost. If it accepts the old methods it has a choice between the Communist way on the one hand and the "free enterprise" way on the other. It can propose that private capital be invited from abroad. But this hardly is a solution. First of all private entrepreneurs will not send capital to underdeveloped countries unless they are assured of a greater profit than at home. To make such super-profits they must have the cooperation of the government to: 1—Exploit labor; 2—Take profits out of the country. But each of these is a blow to industrialization of any "backward" country. Unless there is a rapid increase in consumer demand there will be little impetus for further industrialization; hence low wages are a deterrent to industrializing a country with private capital. And if you permit a company to take its profits out of the country that cuts down the amount of capital available for further development. In fact that has been the crime of imperialism: that it has withdrawn surpluses from the countries where it earned them instead of reinvesting them to develop the underdeveloped areas. If Iran, for instance, had forced Britain to reinvest in Iran its billions in oil profits, the country would long ago have been modernized. But Britain used its billions from Iran to develop Britain, not Iran. To invite foreign capital to an underdeveloped country—even if that capital were willing, which it is ordinarily not—would only compound difficulties. What is more, the state in each such country would have to invest five or ten times as much in social improvements and public works before private companies could be lured in on a big scale. To put up a factory in an underdeveloped

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area requires not just four walls and machinery. There must be a railroad siding, sewers, water, roads, intelligent laborers who can read blueprints, trained supervisory personnel. For each dollar that the private entrepreneur invests in factories the state must invest many dollars for railroads, surface roads, schools. It is safe to say that no country will ever be industrialized by depending primarily on foreign private capital.

On the other hand the Communist road to industrialization is equally unfeasible for Asian Socialism. In China, for instance, the Communist land reform consisted of equal division of land. But equal division merely meant that each peasant had a half-acre or thereabouts for each member of his family. This was undoubtedly an improvement over the past when he paid 40 to 60 per cent of his yield to a landlord. But how does such land reform help industrialization? Traditionally the development of all countries occurs with the increase of yield on the farms and the consequent national savings which are converted to capital. But when a peasant gets his own tiny piece of land and has a greater amount of grain left at the end of the year, he will not automatically save and put his savings into a bank. On the contrary he will begin by consuming more, by taking care of some of his accumulated needs. How then can the state benefit from land reform? If it cannot force the peasant to deliver more grain to the city, the city workers won't be fed as well and the state won't have the surplus to export abroad in return for machinery.

In Stalinist countries this problem is solved simply—the state uses police measures to make the peasant eat less and give up more. He is forced into collectives where the governemnt can keep its eye on him, can prevent him from hiding his surplus grain and slaughtering his cattle. And he is made to yield a certain amount—"according to plan" —no matter how his family fares, whether it starves or not.

But Asian Socialism can not use such police measures; they are alien to its whole doctrine. It can not industrialize at the expense of the people. And since it can hardly depend on substantial gifts from America or other Western countries it has had to work out new approaches.

PROBABLY THE KEENEST THINKER on this subject is the former secretary of the Praja Socialist Party in India, Asoka Mehta. His pamphlet "Socialism and Peasantry" is a classic of contemporary Socialist literature.* Western Socialism and other leftist tendencies have devoted a vast proportion of their literature to the negative side of radicalism—attacks on capitalism, on other leftist tendencies, polemics of one kind or another. But there has been a pathetic paucity of material on how to build Socialism itself. There are few places in Marxian literature which even hint at the difficulties. Every young western radical assumes that the process is almost automatic—destroy capitalism and production

* A section of this work will appear in the next issue of DISSENT.

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must improve and consumption increase. Unfortunately this thesis has been proven to be wrong by the example of Russia; production can improve at the expense of the masses, rather than accrue to their benefit. Mehta's plan for industrializing the underdeveloped areas seeks to avoid precisely such pitfalls. The East, he says, can not industrialize like the West. It can not shift tens of millions of peasants to city factories; it can not concentrate on ever larger factories. It can not follow the American or the Russian pattern; it must approximate rather the Japanese pattern—but with democracy.

Mehta's industrialization program also begins with land reform. He too is for dividing the land and he is critical of the snail's pace at which it is currently being done in India. But after land reform must come a large scale co-operative movement and power-driven village industries. The unemployed and underemployed must be absorbed mostly in the villages, rather than taken out to the cities. The state, if it invests in electrification, flood control, irrigation, dams, will supply more land to the peasants and will offer electricity for small-scale industries in the villages—textiles, metal-fabricating, housing, and many others. The surplus labor will thus be absorbed with a minimum of capital investment. India, like Japan in the past, is pathetically short of capital but long on manpower. It must utilize that manpower with the smallest investment of capital per worker possible. Thus it must rely on using it where it now is, in small co-operative factories rather than in large-scale ventures in the big cities. There must of course be some such development, but it should be limited. In this way the standard of living of the Indian people can improve even while industrialization is gaining a foothold; the Communist method of cutting living standards to pay for industrialization is reversed.

Mehta's approach has been tried out on a limited scale in such cooperative ventures as Faridabad, and with conspicuous success. Whether it can work on a large scale remains to be seen, but at least it is one answer to a perplexing problem that offers no easy solution. It is *the* problem for all Asia, *the* reason why Asian Socialism is so different from European Socialism. Industrialization is already a fact in Europe, land reform is—for the most part—long ago accomplished. The problem now is effective production and equitable distribution, with European Socialism concentrating more and more on palliatives, such as welfarism, in the hopes of accomplishing more equitable distribution. Only here and there is the idea of Socialism in industry analyzed or put into practice. But in Asia this is the cornerstone of all politics—how to industrialize. And in this economic sphere as well as in other fields of politics and international relations, Asian Socialism must practice a third way—neither capitalist nor Stalinist. The logic of its position, the nature of its enemy, impels it in other directions than those of the two main power blocs. Whether it achieves its goal, whether it has the consistency, militancy, or forthrightness to win the masses towards itself remains to be seen. But the errors and weaknesses of Asian

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Socialism, unlike those of European Socialism are the errors and weaknesses of youth, not of senility.

Asian Socialism starts with two big advantages. It has some truly "big" men in leadership roles; and in most places it has a healthy hostility to Stalinism. Men like Kyaw Nyein of Burma, Kemal Djumblatt in Lebanon, Sjahrir in Indonesia, Mehta, Madhu Limaye, Lohia in India are all men of stature. Each is capable of brilliant innovation.

Kemal Djumblatt of Lebanon, for example, is certainly one of the most colorful men in the world. A Druse feudal lord (the Druse are a religious sect and people of Mohammedan origin) he is the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, with some 15,000 or 20,000 members. In September 1952 he led a revolt against the feudal regime which was successful. At that point he could have installed the Socialists in power, but he felt that Socialism needed a more solid base before it could take the helm. He felt that it was first necessary to educate the peasants in the villages. He therefore installed a nationalist named Chamoun into the presidency. Later he broke with him and the conflict will undoubtedly continue. Djumblatt meanwhile is building a Socialist Party along modern lines, with newspapers, party meetings, democratic expression, even "doorbell ringing" in the villages.

Probably the biggest success story in Asian Socialism is in Burma. Here the Socialist Party, led by two capable young men, Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe, is the hub of the government. Here too Socialism has decisively defeated Stalinism, and has done it by progressive means. By the end of the war the Anti-Fascist-People's-Freedom-League, which had led the struggle for independence, had a Communist secretary, Thakin Than Tun. The Socialists at this point were much impressed with Than Tun and with Russia, because they thought of the Soviets as the only white nation that was not imperialist. But when the Communists began their traditional drive to power it alienated the Socialists. Britain was willing to give up Burma, but the Communists were swinging from "softness" to "toughness" and they didn't want independence with even minor strings attached. They insisted that true independence could be wrested only by force. When it was finally gained without war Than Tun denounced some of the points in the agreement with Britain and plunged the country into civil war.

At the outset the Communists controlled the unions, the peasant organization and much of the army. Yet Burmese Socialism, quick to reorganize and very capable in pragmatic maneuvering, immunized the minds of the Burmese people against the Stalinists. Instead of the mechanical land reform and typical Stalinist brutalities in the villages, the Socialists instituted more sensible reforms—lowering the rents to $8 an acre (which usually were not paid because the landlords had fled), securing of land tenure, granting of credits, abolition of the moneylenders, organization of co-ops, and democratic mutual aid teams. The Socialists argued correctly that in the midst of civil war, without fertilizer plants and other necessary preconditions for large-scale farming, it

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was an idle gesture to divide the land arbitrarily. They concentrated instead on alleviating the plight of the peasant while earning enough foreign currency to be used later for industrialization. Today the Burmese capital fund consists of more than a quarter of a billion dollars in foreign valuta alone, and the 8-year plan to lay the groundwork for industrialization has a firm underpinning. The Communists are thoroughly isolated, control not an inch of territory on a permanent basis and are reduced to mere *dacoits*—robbers. Socialism has shown, on this one small testing ground, that it is far superior to Stalinist totalitarianism. In the midst of civil war Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe have permitted full democracy: even the Stalinists have a legal party in Rangoon.

Burma typifies the stresses and strains between Asian Socialism and Asian Communism. Usually (Indo-China is an exception) the Socialists are fairly close to the Communists to begin with. Then they are repelled by Stalinist totalitarianism to the point where they cut their ties and usually cut them decisively. In India, for example, the Socialists, while they were in the Congress Party back in the thirties, had formed a bloc with the Communists, but they soon found the Communists trying to take over their organization and were disgusted with Stalinist policy shifts. During the war when Gandhi and the Socialists demanded that Britain "quit India" as a precondition to aiding the war effort, the Stalinists were released from jail by the British so they could organize full support for the hated foreign power. The Socialists learned their lesson of collaboration with Stalinism in this period and have broken irrevocably wtih "popular frontism." Since they became an independent party after the war they have become a polarizing force, drawing to them the Kripalani left Congressites, Trotskyists and a whole assortment of non-Stalinists leftists—but they eschew Stalinism completely.

This then is the make-up of Asian Socialism: with the exception of Israel and Japan it is concerned with destroying feudalism and imperialism, and with developing a modern industrial economy. In 1952 it organized its own Asian Socialist Conference, significantly quartered in Rangoon, Burma. It maintains a small staff and publishes a monthly magazine. While it has maintained fraternal relations with European Socialism it has adopted a stand-offish attitude towards merger with the Second International. The gap in foreign policy and outlook between the two is too great to be bridged at present. Socialism in Europe is "Second Forcist"—allied with America though critical to some extent. Socialism in Asia is definitely "Third Forcist"—allied with neither bloc, trying to forge one of its own, and Third Forcist internally as well. Most Asian Socialists feel that even Bevanism is too tepid.

Although less than a decade old Asian Socialism is thus taking on both organizational and political form. It is yet too early to assess its course, or to predict its future. All one can say is that it is driven by the whole historical development of Asia to something different from the traditional Socialism we have known in the West. That in itself is worth watching.

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AMERICAN NOTEBOOK Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

Science: From the "Bomb" to . . . ?

Arthur Ray

In Alamogordo, New Mexico there is a crater covered with a glassy-green scurf of death and surrounded by high-tension wires and alarm systems—the site of the first atomic explosion. The neighboring Pueblo Indians take it for granted that every people has its forbidden holy places which only the chosen few may approach. In California, a naked boy, in a test laboratory, his forehead grotesquely pulled back, cheeks flattened by tremendous pressure, is fastened with nylon belts to an upholstered seat revolving at an ever wilder speed, until his entire body is compressed with gigantic force by centrifugal power. In Richland, Wash., site of the Hanford Plutonium Works, fear of radio-activity is so acute that parents warn their children not to pick up anything lying in the street, "or the White Man with the black rubber mask will come, take away your toys, tables, beds, everything you touched, scrape the paint from the walls, tear up the floors." Thus opens a book about America in the Fifties, written by a Swiss journalist, Robert Jungk.* Provocative, episodic, angry, it has none of the philosophical detachment of a de Toqueville surveying an expanding democratic society as it evolves along orderly lines, nor does it carry the exaggerations of Simone de Beauvoir's narcissistic portrait of the U.S. In fact, the author states at the outset that he views present trends in the U.S. as merely the most advanced expression of what is happening in all of contemporary society. Instead of the usual tour of American democratic institutions, he takes us to the secret atomic laboratories, the rocket installations, the aviation medicine testing grounds, the automatic brain factories, the cities struggling with radio-active refuse. The result is a disturbing revelation of hidden yet important realities.

THE NEW RESERVATIONS: A new type of reservation has sprung up, reports Jungk: the laboratory town, the testing ground, the military reservation. These places are segregated geographically and more important, politically. To preserve secrecy and to increase administrative efficiency, to avoid disputes or time-consuming strikes, democratic rights are largely suspended and their administration assumes the form of at best enlightened absolut-

* *TOMORROW IS ALREADY HERE.* Simon and Schuster. $3.50.

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ism. Their location is determined by bureaucratic fiat from Washington and existing population centers are, if necessary, razed by decree. A radio announcer informed the South Carolina townships of Ellenton, Dunbarton, Jackson and Meyers Hill that they would be razed within a stated period to make room for a new atomic factory site. ("Instead of the angel with the flaming sword, nowadays we receive the dispassionate telegram.") A patient Representative in Washington showed great sympathy at a subsequent town meeting, but the decision itself was no longer subject to change.

In other instances, desert areas have become the new centers of 20th Century science, housing many of the leading American physicists, chemists, mathematicians and technicians. "In the wastelands once rejected by covered wagon parties in search of new homesteads, we now find modern man fraternizing with the enemies of life."

Los Alamos: on a gigantic natural pedestal whose nearly perpendicular walls slope off into deep small canyons; a town of 10,000 inhabitants behind a wall protected by electric eyes ("as though the country without castles and moats was making up for its lack of the Middle Ages"); even its own inhabitants unaware of how many secret laboratories it contains; specific areas or even rooms open only to specific personnel; every tenth inhabitant a member of the security division; a nightmare brought up-to-date by the exigencies of a purely military approach to world politics. "Here the finest scientists labor in isolation and silence, enmeshed in security regulations . . . for today the state has become the sole owner of certain important means of production of scientific knowledge."

THE NEW SCIENTIST: The new pioneer can no longer strike out on his own. He does not own his laboratory. He does not "invent" by himself. "His very existence is conceived only in terms of his relationship to the hierarchy of the joint enterprise." This creates a new prototype of "ideal" pioneer, says Jungk: the tractable, self-controlled, non-neurotic, "predictable" member of the unit. The fate of the non-conforming genius is evident in the tragedy of Wallace Hume Carothers, the inventor of Nylon. In 1937, he develops a superfiber which far outlasts Nylon. Du Pont, for obvious reasons, scuttles the invention and Carothers, at the height of his brilliant career, commits suicide.

MAN AS MACHINE: In the interest of technological advance, it becomes inevitable for man himself to "become subject to the application of the same methods he applies to the conquest of nature. He, too, is scientifically tested for his capacity, made use of most efficiently and discarded as soon as he ceases to fulfill the required purpose." The drive toward "predictability" of performance, when applied to man, tends to reduce him to the level of the machine. "Free Will" becomes an unstable element and must be ruled out. In the aviation medicine laboratories, the test objects are constantly exposed to experiments indicating the maximum pressure under which lungs will burst; the point at which fear overcomes moral and spiritual resistance.

"Shaken, beaten, kneaded, scalded, frozen, suffocated, crushed: this happens daily to dozens of young Americans. In the Santa Susane Mountains of California they let themselves be tied to a small sled and

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shot vertically into the air by rocket propulsion; in the Mojave Desert they are whirled by a powered sleigh at meteoric speed on a horizontal rail; in Ann Arbor, Mich., they are driven by means of special sound-recording instruments into complete confusion of speech and sense; in Princeton, N. J. they lose their equilibrium through contact with supersonic waves. They sit in ovens or in ice chambers; they let themselves be hurled in cages that fall freely through the depths of the Carlsbad Caverns; and in San Antonio, they are hermetically sealed in pressure chambers and the air gradually exhausted to simulated altitudes of 60,000 feet, in which the blood begins to boil."

Why do they permit this torment? Because they are told that they are "the pioneers on the frontiers of human endurance" who will enable scientists to learn how to exceed these limits. These tests have already revealed that man in his present form is not "suitable" to the most advanced machines—that he is rapidly becoming "a drag on progress"—"a faulty construction".

This testing also proceeds apace under the guise of "personnel management." Carried on by highly trained specialists called "Human Relations Experts" by management, or "Soul Bunglers" by workers, they utilize standard psychological tests, lie detectors, information gained from local credit offices, childhood teachers, private detective firms, or microphones concealed in washrooms. Their conclusions are recorded in "psychographs, productometers, motive profiles, sociograms and communication charts, with each worker appearing as a fraction number—a decimal part of a total Sum." The slogan is: "the best person for the job"; carried to its scientific conclusion, this demands the "inclusion of the complete personality of the employee in the evaluation"—i.e. his political and moral outlook is considered as much a part of his qualifications as his technical ability. Do they have sex problems? Are they aggressive? Do they remember names? What is their political orientation? In America, the growth of huge enterprises, the mobility of the population, the impossibility of knowing the backgrounds of the applicants, has made these testing procedures practically inevitable, until today they are used by all leading corporations and more and more by medium-sized enterprises as well. Sales personnel are tested by "'plants" disguised as customers. In carefully staged test situations, groups of candidates are watched through transparent, one-way glass in observation domes, "interacting" upon each other. In separate, private interviews with their prospective employer, candidates are asked to evaluate each other. The victim becomes the executioner.

THE MACHINE AS MAN: As man becomes machine-like, the machine seems to be evolving toward man. In performance, it reveals unexpected sensibilities and "moods." The electronic brains are "'slow" at starting in the morning. They exhibit electronic nervousness when confronted with too difficult problems. The machines are developing their own complex language: rockets record their performance data on sensitized paper, sound strips, films, emulsions and graphic scales which necessitate "re-translating" from the language of instruments back to the language of humans. In the atomic furnaces, robots handling

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radioactive materials now copy and combine all seven fundamental movements of the human hand. In political, military and economic planning, the electronic brain is utilized by the National Bureau of Standards, the Department of Statistics and the General Staff to calculate exceedingly complex questions involving the respective distribution of raw materials to various branches of industry, newest statistics on armies, new weapons and armament industries.

THE TREND TOWARD CONFORMISM: The requirements of standardization—in turn imposed by the need for greater rationality in production, large-scale markets, planning by machines—lead in America today to a strong drive toward conformism. This, says the author, is far more than a political issue expressing the prevailing aim of fitting the individual into a homogeneous, easily serviced mass of "average consumers." National interests when faced with an H-bomb threat necessitate strict controls over its citizens; total war signifies total subordination of the individual to the ever-stronger state. The teamwork aspect of modern science, the organized endeavor to "mold" a more perfect man, the growing bureaucratization of government, the secrecy surrounding scientific projects—all these lead to ever-increasing totalitarian tendencies.

THE ROLE OF SCIENCE: America's reaching for omnipotence, says the author, undermines the national ethos: "instead of belief and conscience, the sole criteria now are purpose and results. The test of utility supersedes the test of conscience." Trying to win absolute mastery over nature, America strives toward "becoming God." Freedom and humanity fall by the wayside. What is needed, says Jungk, is "a great spiritual change, which would have to express itself in the recognition once again of human limits and the rediscovery of moderation." This change will come from bitter experience: "only when the convulsive grasp at omnipotence finally relaxes, will America be recovered by Him Whom it has discarded, by God."

Thus a book which catalogues however sketchily some of the greatest technological advances of man, ends on a note of gloomy religiosity. Jungk has throughout his work displayed a profoundly mixed feeling toward science, simultaneously extolling its achievement and deploring its consequences. Instead of directing his wrath against the social order which utilizes science for war and destruction, he misdirects it against the neutral workings of science itself. The result is a moral preachment instead of a political analysis. Once a certain level of technological development has been reached further scientific development is inevitable and irreversible: from here on in, man has to live *with* atomic energy, or not live at all. Hiroshima notwithstanding, the conquest of the atom remains one of the greatest scientific conquests of man. Our problem is not the "advisability" of this conquest, as Jungk would have it, but its social utilization. Every one of the technological "threats" enumerated by the author (and threats they are, given the *present* situation) can be a blessing in a rationally organized society: the electronic computer could greatly facilitate social planning; attempts to substitute automation for human labor and to utilize atomic energy could have

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the most profoundly desirable implications in a society organized along socialist lines.

The facile rationalism of the 19th century, optimistically predicting man's inevitable mastery of nature, was an expression of an expanding society. Today the technological advances of the past few decades have revealed themselves to carry a series of terrifying social implications far surpassing their narrowly scientific significance. The subversion of science for military and destructive purposes has led many to question the very premises of scientific endeavor. Yet, amidst the ruins of 19th century rationalism, it is important to resurrect a less virginal and hence more mature 20th century version of the inevitability and necessity of scientific progress. This is the more impressive given the prevailing drift back into religiosity, mysticism and totalitarianism. But this resurrection is possible only if we realize that every step forward in science, taken in a society of stagnation and decline, leads to precisely the type of inhuman totalitarian and retrogressive consequences outlined in Jungk's book.

Jungk's fear of becoming "God-like" is the healthy defense mechanism of a humanist appalled by the horrors of 1954. Yet it puts the blame where it does not belong. Far from being an impediment to his happiness, man's restless ambition is the motor force which *ultimately might assure his mastery over nature.*

THE ROLE OF THE SCIENTIST: Jungk quotes approvingly the leading physicist John Von Neumann: "We scholars were apostles and have become bishops. We made pacts with the mighty and let ourselves be harnessed by them for their own ends. This is harmful to the pure message of science, which cares for nothing but truth." Hence: scientists should retreat into isolation and solitude, free of government control and interference.

This "solution" is illusory. The scientist cannot find salvation outside the society of which inevitably he is a member. His task remains, as it does for others, participation in the painful, patient process of social intervention and change, the search for the sources of power in contemporary society, the attempt to organize society for man. The best comment on Jungk's approach is that the very same Von Neumann has just been appointed to the Atomic Energy Commission by President Eisenhower—thus presumably advancing to archbishopry instead of changing back into an apostle.

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COMMUNICATIONS

What Manner of Change in Russia?

Paul Willen

The intense interest which Isaac Deutscher's recent writings on the Soviet Union have aroused reflects the fact that, adequately or inadequately, he has, almost alone, posed the critical questions which confront serious students of contemporary Soviet power.

A keen historian, he treats the Soviet Union as a changing social system, subject to significant alterations resulting from the forces which it has set in motion. The weakness of most of his critics is that they have attempted to repudiate his dynamic thesis with schematic and rigid definitions of a static social quantity known as "Stalinism" or "totalitarianism." Lewis Coser's reply to Deutscher, printed in the Summer 1954 issue of DISSENT, falls into this category of repeating the time-worn platitudes which grew out of earlier struggles to demonstrate the reactionary and class character of the Soviet system.

The time has come, it seems to me, to look beyond these early political manifestos. It is difficult, for example, to understand the widespread reluctance to accept Deutscher's contention that the Stalinist social system, like any other, is subject to change, even within the framework of the existing dictatorship, and that many changes are taking place today which are only faintly reflected in the visible monolithic exterior. Also surprising is the expression of contempt which greeted Deutscher's theory that the Stalinist system has unwittingly created many of the forces and conditions essential to its eventual destruction. I quite understand, too, Deutscher's impatience with those who, because it seems to throw a temporary wrench into the machinery of the cold war, refuse to acknowledge the important changes which Stalin's death brought to the Soviet Empire.

The future social forms of Russia must be sought in the "womb" of modern Russia—industrialized, urbanized, Stalinized, totalitarian—as different from the Russia of 1917 as the Russia of 1917 was from the Russia of the Decembrists. To say this is not to ascribe (as Deutscher would have us do) a "progressive role" to Stalinism, any more than it would be to ascribe a "progressive role" to Czarism of the 19th century. It is simply to state an indisputable historical fact.

Industrialization does not automatically produce democracy. This is undoubtedly true, and it is one 19th Century myth which any child can destroy. But it may still be said that it is one of the preconditions for functioning democracy; it does give people the tools with which, under given conditions, they

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This article by Paul Willen is the last of the comments we solicited on the article by Isaac Deutscher which appeared in the Summer 1954 issue of DISSENT.

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can struggle for their lives and their fortunes. Mr. Coser's contention that the industrialization of backward countries has not brought any "corresponding increase in self-awareness of the masses" is refuted by the entire history of the Far East since the end of World War II.

Increased literacy has provided the Kremlin with additional means of control; but there is every reason to believe that it has also provided the people with tremendous mechanisms for change and expanded many horizons. The very fact that the Soviet State must use totalitarian controls indicates that increased literacy has not dulled men's minds nor their urge for freedom.

In the last 37 years of Bolshevik rule classes have gone under, boundaries have been thrown back hundreds of miles, peoples have been extinguished, enormous new industries have been created in once-barren lands, and an entirely new proletariat and managerial class have come into existence. It is in these trends—terrible and brutal—that we must search for the roots of future democratic Russia—if it is to be located at all—and not in Lenin's debate with Plekhanov in 1902 or in definitions of the inner and unchangeable laws of totalitarianism. Lenin's 1917 train was *not* intercepted in Germany; Stalin's march to power after 1922 was *not* halted by flaming oratory; and a whole new historical epoch was born.

The changes continue to this day. Lenin's vanguard of revolutionaries was one thing; Stalin's engineers who worked night and day to build Magnitogorsk over the bodies of starved peasants were something else; and Malenkov's privilege-conscious, paper-entangled bureaucrat is still another breed. To see in these vast and complex historical developments nothing but an irrational conspiracy against human liberty is to isolate oneself from one of the key historical experiences of our era. Human liberty *was* extinguished in the process, horribly and miserably; but that is not the sum and substance of Russian history since 1917.

II

So far—so good. Deutscher has set the stage for a fruitful discussion of the major developments within the Stalinist Regime. It is, however, at this very point that one must part company with him, for here he shifts from the role of a long-range historian to the partisan of one of history's special interests, from a distant spectator to a zealous participant.

Change is inevitable, he says, inexorable; but do not attempt to hasten it or the grand schema I've described will be upset. Let Malenkov & Co. decide when the political system he presides over has outlived its economic base; let the ruling class he represents determine which historical moment is best suited to its own voluntary relinquishment of caste privileges.

Thus in the final analysis, Deutscher's primary allegiance is to the new class of educated Soviet bureaucrats, a class of men who are, in Deutscher's view, in no danger of losing anything from the abolition of "Stalinism." They are distinct from it; they will not mourn its passing. Stalinism thrives today only on a type of inertia. In his view, then, Soviet society is basically healthy, and its leadership basically sound. What Russia needs is a purging of the "irrational" and "primitive" elements. This purging can be carried out, he

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is convinced, without tampering with the present Soviet social structure, and without, in fact, needlessly stirring up the mass of the people.

Here lies Deutscher's fundamental illusion. Without denying for a moment the permanence of the technological advances achieved in the last decades, it is possible to question the basic rationality of the Soviet industrial system. The economy is planned; but for what, by whom, for whom? No one who is familiar with the constant series of crises which erupt in the Soviet economy could agree, for example, with Deutscher's bold claim that the Soviet economy is "immune from that extreme economic and moral instability which in bourgeois society tends to produce fascist mass neuroses." No one who is familiar with the thousand cries of corruption, waste, bungling, neglect, nepotism, servility, and callousness which constantly appear in the Soviet press can possibly accept Deutscher's view that Stalinist "irrationality" is confined to the surface phenomena of Soviet society.

The "irrationality" and "primitivism" which Deutscher identifies with Stalinism are not merely reflected in the crude state ceremonies and cultural vendettas so well popularized in the West, but are part of the authoritarian economic system itself. This has been demonstrated with great lucidity during the past year of feverish efforts to reorient part of the economy in the direction of efficient consumer goods' production; the inability of the system to make this shift becomes every day more apparent, no matter how concerted the effort.

To refute this argument Deutscher summons all his rhetorical skills, for it is this argument—which he says comes from a "certain type of 'left-wing' cold war propagandist"— which constitutes the most serious threat to his larger thesis. This "certain type" argues that the Soviet bureaucracy is constitutionally incapable of reforming itself, and Deutscher must step lively to cope with it.

As in *Russia, What Next?* his argument proceeds more from logic than from fact. He declares, for example, that there is no *absolutely* reliable proof that the *entire* bureaucracy will, as a *single unit,* fight *all* reforms "tooth and nail." Having, at great effort, proven this he moves rapidly to the most extraordinary conclusions.

Of course, there are divisions within the Soviet ruling class, sharp and critical ones; of course, some factions will take the lead in formulating concessions while other sections will hold fast to the traditional policies. Who can doubt this for a minute? If events move rapidly enough, it is even possible that individual members of the ruling bureaucracy—motivated either by self-interest or idealism—will pass over to the masses and give them the type of leadership which the Soviet regime has so consistently and ruthlessly denied them. It is possible too that various lower organs of control—trade unions, local councils—will be transformed by gradual pressure into genuine organs of complaint, mass pressure, and even outright revolt.

Let Deutscher have his hard-won point: The *entire* bureaucracy is not unalterably opposed to reform. Can we jump from this conclusion to the assertion that the bureaucracy will take the initiative in the democratization of Russia? Obviously not. It is true, as Deutscher points out, that "quasi-liberal reform from above . . . may most effectively spur on a revival of spontaneous political action from below or create the conditions under which such action

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may become possible." But it will be the "revival of spontaneous political action from below" that will be the primary engine of change, not the "quasi-liberal reform from above" upon which Deutscher has pinned so many hopes.

The niggardly reforms made by the post-Stalin government in the last year and a half indicate that certain "quasi-liberal reforms from above" can be expected; but if these minor reforms have convinced Deutscher that "Stalinism" will be abolished from above, one can see the superficial significance which he attaches to the term "Stalinism," and the distance separating his conception of "democratization" from that of a true democrat.

The leader-cult is gone, but a thousand other primitive and reactionary cults remain, clogging every vein of Russian life and culture. One need only be reminded of the barbaric festival held last May in Kiev and Moscow to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the "reunion of the fraternal Russian and Ukrainian peoples" to realize this.

Last fall and winter Ehrenburg, Shostakovich and others penned a series of scathing attacks on the Stalinist cultural straitjacket. "Books cannot be manufactured like shoes," said Ehrenburg. "Our novels are contrived," wrote another critic, Pomerantsev, "we need more sincerity." The novelist Zorin subversively suggested that the corrupt Soviet bureaucrat was a product of indigenous conditions in Soviet life. Hopes were high; and everyone imagined that serious changes were in the offing.

But subsequent events have made a mockery of these hopes. Pomerantsev has been sharply rebuked. Zorin was told that while it was legitimate to attack individual bureaucrats, it was subversive to attack the bureaucracy itself. All efforts to understand the basic causes of administrative maladies and economic inefficiencies have been severely censored.

This is not to deny that changes have occurred in the past year and a half. There is no doubt that everywhere in the Stalinist Empire the atmosphere has been relaxed. Malenkov's departure from the Kremlin is only the last in a series of startling moves of genuine importance. These changes reflect the long-range trends which Deutscher—notwithstanding Coser's criticism—so astutely analyzed. But if these reforms are the best the bureaucracy can do in a year and a half, then surely in time the masses will find a more direct means of expressing their needs, of giving vent to their long-accumulated hatred.

Deutscher's confidence in the wisdom and essential benevolence of the Soviet ruling class stems from the same type of historical error of which he correctly accuses his critic Raymond Aron and others. Deutscher points out that it is absurd to insist that Lenin's "authoritarianism" constitutes an obstacle to internal Soviet democratization today. But equally unhistoric is Deutscher's contention that a "resurgence" of Lenin's "proletarian democratic" spirit may be considered one of the ingredients in the expected democratization today. Both aspects of Leninism are irrelevant in the modern Soviet setting.

III

Deutscher's political bias (as distinct from his historical vision) is most irritatingly revealed in his insistence upon labelng all critics of his analysis as "cold-war propagandists" (that is, warmongers). This effort to link a

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type of analysis with a given political viewpoint casts doubt upon his own objectivity and makes it possible for his opponents to treat his better arguments as if they were merely Soviet apologetics.

And indeed, there is no other way to treat Deutscher's elaborate exposé on the subject of Bonapartism. It is a curious argument. He tries to show that if the Malenkov coalition government were to fall before a Bonapartist military dictatorship the world would immediately be plunged into the Third World War. Since the only alternative to the "Bonapartist solution" is the "democratic evolution of Communism" it turns out that the only hope of world peace lies in the continued rule of the Malenkov clique. But there are two especially dubious assumptions in this case.

The first is that Stalin's foreign policy was an essentially peaceful one. Now while it is true that Stalin always stopped short of global war in conducting his affairs, one can hardly term Soviet foreign policy between 1945 and 1953 a "pacific" one, as Deutscher has done!

The second is the equation of Stalin's successors with Napoleon's predecessors. The oddity of this equation is that Deutscher himself is perhaps more responsible than anyone else for the great historical analogy between Stalin and the greatest "Bonapartist" of them all, Napoleon. Therefore, following Deutscher's own logic, we are at present in a post-Bonapartist period, not a pre-Bonapartist one, as he wishes us to think.

These labored historical analogies leave one exhausted, and only someone who has something to sell will pursue them further. Deutscher's product is the "democratic evolution of Communism from above," and by this curious argument he wishes to prove it not only desirable but necessary to world peace. Therefore he justifies the suppression of efforts to alter the Soviet system from below, efforts such as the East Germans made in June 1953.

In his concluding paragraph Deutscher begs that we show "patience" before history's inexorable ways. Such complacency is understandable here in America, or in England or France, but it takes the utmost callousness to ask it of those 800 million people who suffer under this "historical necessity" to whose defense Deutscher is lending so many of his superb talents.

Among our new contributors: Sid Lens, the author of "Left, Right and Center" (1949) and "The Counterfeit Revolution" (1952), as well as numerous articles in some two-dozen publications, recently returned from a one-year trip around the world . . . Ned Polsky was formerly on the editorial staff of "The Chicago Review." . . . Edouard Roditi, a well-known poet, is the author of a study of Oscar Wilde . . . Paul Willen, who was invited to participate in our discussion on Russia, has appeared in *Commentary*, *The Reporter* and other periodicals.

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Albert Mathiez, the great historian of the French Revolution and intrepid defender of Jacobinism, followed the progress of the Russian Revolution with close interest. An historian steeped in the events of 1793 *would naturally be inclined to see their reenactment in the events of* 1917, *but the patterns of similarity he found were deep and genuine.*

Except, it might be remarked, in one respect. In his final paragraphs Mathiez raises the possibility of a collapse or destruction of the Russian Revolution along lines similar to that of the French Revolution--by counter-revolution from without, or by an armed coup, a restoration. Trotsky, whose view of the Russian Revolution was permeated with the imagery of the French Revolution, also thought in these terms. But the counter-revolution in Russia came not from without, either nationally or socially, but from within, from a new ruling group which arose inside the body of the revolution and in its name destroyed it. One reason why Trotsky never fully saw this was that he was so thoroughly captivated by the kind of historical analogy that Mathiez draws in the following article.

While Mathiez was comparing the Russian to the French Revolution in order to validate but not glorify the Bolshevik experience, Rosa Luxemburg was criticizing Lenin's policy precisely because it followed the Jacobin pattern. This is not the place to compare the analyses of Mathiez and Luxemburg, both of whom wrote as friends of the Russian Revolution but, obviously, from different historical assumptions. But in Mathiez' toughly realistic study and Luxemburg's sharp criticism one can see the two poles of political analysis—the claims of historical necessity and the claims of value-judgment —in clear perspective.

With this article, DISSENT *hopes to initiate a discussion on the subject of the Russian Revolution. An article called "Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin," by Benno Sarel, will appear in a later issue. Other contributions are invited.*

Mathiez' article first appeared in Scientia, *an international review, in* 1920. *In slightly abridged form, it is translated here for the first time into English.* —I. H.

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BOLSHEVISM AND JACOBINISM

Albert Mathiez

Between Jacobinism (by which I mean the government of the Mountain, from June 1793 to July 1794) and Bolshevism, there is a significant parallel. Lenin himself is fond of drawing it in his speeches.* Like all Russian socialists, Lenin was nurtured on the history of our Great Revolution, is inspired by its precedents, and puts them into practice after adapting them to the special conditions of his country.

In a brief analysis, I shall try to show that between the methods of the Bolsheviks and those of the Montagnards the analogies are not only obvious, but are joined by a close and logical kinship.

Jacobinism and Bolshevism are both dictatorships born of civil and foreign war; both are class dictatorships utilizing the same methods: terror, requisitioning and taxation; and, in the final analysis, both propose a similar goal: the transformation of society—not merely the society of France or of Russia but of the whole world.

Both dictatorships emerged out of defeat and imposed their rule through uprisings. The betrayal of Dumouriez, the Belgian disasters, the retreat of the armies on all fronts enabled the Montagnards to crush the Girondists, called to account in the Paris days of May 31 and June 2, 1793. The failure of the offensive ordered by Kerensky in July 1917, followed by the Kornilov adventure, set the stage for the victory of the Soviets in the Petrograd insurrection of October 25, 1917. There is an apparent difference here. The Montagnards took power in order to intensify the war and drive through to victory, while the Bolsheviks in the beginning could think only of peace—peace at any price. But note carefully that for the Montagnards and the Bolsheviks, peace and war are only means of safeguarding the revolution. Faced with Russia's exhaustion and general war-weariness, Lenin is convinced that peace is necessary as a respite for consolidating the results of his *coup de force*. Robespierre, on the other hand, sensing the patriotic mood of his country and knowing its resources, believed that preservation of the Revolution and immediate victory on the battlefield were inseparable. . . .

* "If one employs the criteria of western revolutions, we are now approximately at the level attained in 1793 and 1870." (Lenin's speech of May 28, 1918.)

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Both dictatorships are based on the lower classes but led by deserters from the former ruling class. The People's Commissars, for the most part, are not the shabby adventurers depicted by the servile press. Lenin, like Lunacharsky, is the son of a former acting State Counsellor. Chicherin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, is also of noble birth. Trotsky is the son of a landowner. Zinoviev and Kamenev are from the bourgeoisie and are university graduates. Uritsky is an engineer and Rykov an official translator. Madame Kollontai is the wife of an army colonel. Joffe and Sokolnikov each possessed considerable fortunes.

Similarly, Maximilien de Robespierre came from a line of lawyers; Chevalier de Saint-Just, of army officers; Hérault de Séchelles, from the old nobility; and Carnot, Couthon, Le Bas, the two Prieurs and Robert Lindet were all of good bourgeois stock.

Both dictatorships had their roots in and drew their strength from the populations of the big cities, particularly from those of the capitals. The Montagnards' stronghold was in the sections of Paris inhabited by artisans. The Bolsheviks recruited their Red Guard from among the factory workers of Petrograd.

The peasants, who in both the France of 1793 and present-day Russia comprise the mass, are won over respectively to the Montagnard and the Bolshevik cause by the promise of material advantages. After their victory over the Gironde, the Montagnards uprooted the last vestiges of feudalism by abolishing the still-existing seignorial fees based on ancient land titles. They confiscated the property of the émigrés, a rich booty which made up their war treasury. The peasant who acquired land from Noble or Church felt himself in solidarity with the Jacobin cause, being tied to it with the powerful bonds of personal interest. For him, the defeat of the Revolution would mean dispossession and ruin.

In similar fashion the Bolsheviks enthroned themselves in October by turning over the lands of the monasteries and the large estates to the *muzhiks*. These confiscated lands, administered by district committees, represent a vast reserve which assures the régime of the loyalty of the rural masses and also, to a certain degree, facilitates the flow of foodstuffs to its urban partisans.

BOTH THE FRENCH AND THE RUSSIAN DICTATORSHIPS are ultra-realistic. In the name of the public welfare they do not hesitate to violate openly the very principles they advocate. Robespierre and Lenin alike justify the use of terror as necessitated by the exigencies of the internal and external struggle. Both promise to end it when victory is won. "Under the constitutional régime," declares Robespierre, "it is sufficient to protect the individual from the abuses of public power; under the revolutionary régime, the public power is compelled to defend itself against all who

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attack it." Saint-Just puts it more bluntly: "What constitutes a republic is the total destruction of everything opposing it." Lenin echoes this: "It is the height of stupidity and absurdly utopian to suppose that the passage from capitalism to socialism is possible without compulsion and dictatorship." And again: "It is impossible to achieve victory and root out capitalism without merciless repression of the resistance of the exploiters, who will not be deprived suddenly of their fortune, organizational advantages and knowledge without attempting consequently and over a long period of time to rid themselves of the domination of the poor."

Both Robespierre and Lenin demanded the abolition of capital punishment. Yet in power they wielded the death penalty as an instrument of governing. They demanded freedom of the press, yet they suppressed opposition newspapers.

In brief, the end justifies the means and surmounts all contradictions. The end in both cases is the welfare of the masses. "We seek," said Robespierre, "a state of affairs in which all low and cruel passions are chained, all charitable and generous passions encouraged by law . . . in which the fatherland assures the welfare of each individual . . . in which commerce becomes the source of public wealth and not merely the monstrous opulence of a few firms." "Our aim," added Saint-Just, "is to establish a sincere government so that the people may be happy." Trotsky says the same on the eve of October: "We shall establish a power which shall have no other aim than to satisfy the needs of the soldiers, workers and peasants. The State shall be the instrument to liberate the masses from all forms of slavery."

Let no one protest that Robespierre respected individual property while Lenin denies it. A difference in time explains the difference in theories and specific solutions, but the basic attitude is similar. Moreover, Lenin has not abolished property. The measures he has adopted are as opportunistic as those decreed by the Montagnards. They correspond in kind to the same necessities and are no different in nature.

The Bolsheviks have nationalized the banks, taken inventory of private holdings and transferred them to the State Bank, setting limits on the amount of cash withdrawals; but they have not abolished individual property. The Jacobins did not hesitate to take over the banks either, nor to freeze their assets and place them under strict regulations. The Committee of Public Safety ordered all merchants of Bordeaux to furnish 20 million francs in foreign drafts and to export merchandise worth this amount. Nor was this exceptional. Robespierre subordinated property rights to social interests, defining this as "the portion of ownership guaranteed by law."

The Bolsheviks have taken over the factories and managed them through committees elected by the workers. The Jacobins set them an

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early example by commandeering many of the ironworks and workshops needed for war production and controlling them through a narrow state administration. . . .

It would be a mistake to think that the Bolshevik committees which manage the factories and control farm production in Russia are sovereign. The Soviet Republic is as centralized and bureaucratic as was the French Republic of the Jacobins. It is true that the agrarian committees which control the confiscated big estates are elected, but at their elbow stands the central power in the person of armed commissars with full authority to insure subordination to the state. The same is true of the committees elected by the factory workers; they do not have control of the factories. Often the former owner reappears as agent-manager for the state. Lenin does not want the proletarian power to remain "in a gelatinous stage." He endeavors to put an end to disorganization, and pursues an iron-handed policy. "Any individual who breaks the discipline of work," he declares, "in any enterprise, in any kind of business, will be haled into court and punished without mercy." The revolutionary courts of Soviet Russia, like those of Montagnard France, class as counter-revolutionary crimes hoarding, sabotage, deceit, tax evasion and concealment of inventory. Under an old law dealing with the administration of railroads, commissars control the entire railway system with powers as broad as those of the Convention's proconsuls.

"Revolutionary government," said Robespierre, "has nothing in common with anarchy. Its aim, on the contrary, is to repress it in order to insure and fortify the rule of law." Lenin is no more fond of disorder: "If we are not anarchists, we must accept the necessity of the State, that is to say, the necessity of constraint during the stage of transition from capitalism to socialism. Every big technical industry demands the most severe and absolute unity of will directing the simultaneous work of hundreds, thousands and even tens of thousands of men. How can we insure the most severe unity of will? By submitting the will of those thousands to the will of one." (May 28, 1918.)

I have read somewhere that Lenin was inspired by the methods of the Hébertists. All his words and deeds discredit such an opinion. Like Robespierre, Lenin claims to shun the two extremes which might engulf the revolution: moderation and exaggeration. He declares in a speech (previously cited) that compromises are necessary before attaining the communist order. Thus the decree on cooperatives, published in the spring of 1918, is a compromise worked out between the bourgeois and the workers' cooperatives. "By such a compromise with the bourgeois cooperatives . . . i.e., by directing the bourgeois elements, by utilizing them, by granting them certain partial concessions, we have created the necessary conditions for a

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forward movement, the latter being slower than we anticipated originally, but at the same time stronger, with a firm guarantee for the base and line of communication, with better fortification of the position attained." This was precisely the tactic with which Robespierre endeavored to rally and reassure the small merchants and property-owners of France.

When, after Brest-Litovsk, Lenin and Trotsky created a new army from which they excluded politically doubtful elements, they again followed Jacobin teachings. As soon as the Constituent Assembly met, Robespierre proposed that the royal army be disbanded and replaced by a new, republican army, thus seeking to purge the members of the old nobility from the officer corps. His proposal was rejected, but the noblemen-officers chose to emigrate, so the same result was achieved.

More than anyone else, Robespierre professed distrust of militarism and supervised his generals with a most suspicious eye. He predicted that the war would lead to a dictatorship of the sword. Nevertheless, this same Robespierre supplied the following definition of military discipline: "Discipline is the soul of the army; it makes up for numbers, but numbers cannot make up for lack of discipline." While granting volunteers the right to elect their leaders through an ingenious graduated system, the Committee of Public Safety gradually managed, in point of fact, to establish very strict obedience to its will. The People's Commissars have done the same; as of April 23, 1918, the election of officers in the Red Army has been abolished.

It could be pointed out that the dictatorship of the Montagnards was a legal one, the instrument of the National Convention which expressed the will of the nation, while the Bolshevik dictatorship, since it dispersed the Constituent Assembly and now maintains itself by force, is altogether illegal. But one should not exaggerate the difference between the two régimes. The Convention was elected during the troubled time of the September massacres: Most of the electoral assemblies that nominated the deputies had to submit to the rule of the Clubs. They had to vote by voice. Furthermore, the Jacobins and their partisans were almost the only participants in these elections. One must not forget that the Montagnard dictatorship established itself through the uprisings of June 2, 1793 which crippled the Convention by excluding all the Girondist leaders and shortly sending them to the guillotine. The arrest of the 73 Girondists who protested the events of June 2 was sufficient to alter the majority. The Montagnards governed by means of a purged assembly. The Bolsheviks preferred dispersal to this sort of crippling. Where in any of this is legality?

The Bolsheviks replaced the Constituent Assembly with the Congress of Soviets. It is as if the Committee of Public Safety had replaced the Convention with the Society of Jacobins. The Soviets disfranchised a

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great number of citizens, including monks, employers and the idle. Before them the Jacobins of the revolutionary committees had established lists of suspects, and even earlier the Constitutional Monarchy of 1791 had deprived of their political rights all who refused to take the civil oath. All the Bolsheviks have done is to perfect the Jacobin methods.

The Montagnards organized a system of ration cards, but never thought of using them as a political weapon. More ingenious, the Bolsheviks divided the population into four categories, each with different ration privileges. Suspects are entitled only to half- or quarter-rations. A highly efficient but indeed terrible way of winning followers!

In order to overcome the resistance of rich peasants who were reluctant to comply with requisitioning, the Bolsheviks set up committees of poor peasants, which carried out all rationing measures. The Jacobins never went this far, but they packed the revolutionary committees with *sans-culottes* and instructed them to see to it that the "Law of the Maximum" was applied.

It would be futile to look for a contrast between the individualism of the Jacobins and the communism of the Bolsheviks. The Jacobins claimed to defend the right of ownership. They punished by death those who preached the "agrarian law," i.e., communism. But they also confiscated, expropriated and requisitioned. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, while professing belief in communism and the abolition of private property, nevertheless allow it to survive.

The Jacobins were at one with the Bolsheviks in placing the rights of society above individual rights. Did not Saint-Just propose confiscating the property of all opponents of the régime? "The Revolution is leading us to acknowledge the fact that those who have proved to be enemies of their country cannot be property owners." Following his motion, the Convention voted this decree: "The properties of patriots are sacred and inviolable. The belongings of persons alien to the Revolution shall be sequestered for the profit of the Republic. These persons shall be detained until the day of peace and then banished forever." One may have to believe in the principle of ownership in order thus to violate it, but here it becomes merely a privilege of citizenship.

When the Bolsheviks seize all vacant domiciles and turn them over to the poor, and impress members of the bourgeoisie into forced labor battalions, they prove themselves more faithful to Jacobin teachings than you might think. "Do not tolerate," said Saint-Just, "that there be a single unhappy or poor man left in the state; only at this price will you have achieved a revolution and a true Republic. . . . Force everyone to do something, to take up a trade which serves liberty. . . . What rights have those in the fatherland who do not work?"

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Nowadays, politicians who proclaim themselves the heirs of the Jacobins praise their patriotism as against the defeatism and internationalism of the Bolsheviks. This dichotomy is entirely superficial and cannot withstand analysis. The Montagnards, to be sure, devoted themselves with sublime ardor to national defense. Robespierre typified chauvinism in his relentless denunciations of foreign refugees in France whom he suspected, not without reason, of serving as spies for the enemy. From the tribune of the Jacobins, he even pronounced his famous curse upon the English people. But he made no distinction between the interests of France and the cause of the Revolution; the triumph of our armies was for him merely a prelude to the triumph of liberty all over the world. He never repudiated the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. He sought to include in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* of 1793 the following articles:

> I. Men of all countries are brothers, and people of different countries must help each other according to their means, as if they were citizens of the same State.
> II. Whoever oppresses one nation is the enemy of all.
> III. Those who fight the people of one country in order to block the progress of liberty and abolish human rights shall be prosecuted by all, not merely as common enemies but as rebellious foes and brigands.
> IV. Kings, aristocrats, tyrants of all kinds are slaves in rebellion against Mankind, sovereign of the earth, and against Nature, legislator of the universe.

This class internationalism, which Lenin could surely endorse, was never forsaken by Robespierre. When the followers of Danton, eager to make peace, proposed abandoning the Belgians, Rhinelanders, Savoyards and all the other peoples whose hopes hung on French promises, Robespierre vehemently opposed them. When he proclaimed his hatred for the English, it was because he despised in them what he saw as a slavish docility to the will of their masters. "There is something even more despicable than a tyrant," he declared, "and that is a slave! It is not up to us to pay for the revolution in England. Let this people free themselves, and we will render them all our friendship and esteem." We would do Robespierre a grave injustice if we attributed to him the mentality of our present-day imperialists.

Appearances notwithstanding, there is no important difference between Jacobin and Bolshevik conceptions of international relations. Mr. Antonelli, in his recent book, puts it very well: "The Bolsheviks do not concede the right of people outside the proletarian class to organize freely. The logic of their doctrine of proletarian interventionism forces them to intervene whenever the cause of the proletariat seems endangered. . . . Bolshevik interventionism is similar to the Republican interventionism of the French Revolution. But it is even more dangerous. It does not take into account moral and ethical factors."

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It is certainly true that the Bolsheviks considered the truce of Brest-Litovsk only temporary. As soon as they could, they again took up arms to free the proletariat of Finland, Esthonia, Lithuania and the Ukraine and lent support to the Spartacist uprising and the Hungarian revolution. Their proselytizing as well as their repudiation of the Tsarist government's financial obligations explain the hostility their name invokes in countries with traditional governments. The Jacobins aroused the same fear and fury in their time. It would be a very amusing and instructive game to compile and compare the judgments, over the 125-year interval, of governments and journalists trying to check the spreading plague.

LET US NOT DECEIVE OURSELVES or try to fool others by depicting the Bolshevik government (with the Jacobin example before it) as an artificial creation hammered out of decrees conceived in the brains of a few visionaries and men of ambition. The reality is quite otherwise. The Soviets were not invented by the Bolsheviks; they were in existence long before the latter seized power. The Russian soldiers at the front did not wait for Brest-Litovsk to make peace with the Germans, any more than the *muzhiks* waited for the decree of October 25, 1917, before taking the land from the monks and gentry. The factory workers had already organized production committees when Lenin undertook his *coup de force*.

The People's Commissars had to create order out of chaos. They stabilized an earlier state of affairs by creating a legal framework for it. "Sometimes," notes Antonelli, "their intervention was even a moderating one which aligned certain elements of the working class and peasants against them." This again is foreshadowed in Jacobin times. Most of the great revolutionary measures of the Year II were not initiated by members of the Committee of Public Safety nor by deputies of the Convention, but were forced upon them by pressure from the Clubs. The "Maximum" (taxation of all necessities) was urgently demanded by sectional groups long before this principle was made law. The Montagnards tried at first to avoid such measures, believing them dangerous. The "levy in mass" or first requisition, the entrusting of the revolutionary army with carrying out the Laws of Sustenance, and the turning upon Christianity, were all fruits of the initiative of the Club leaders and local administrations before they were accepted and legalized by the Convention.

Both the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks were caught in a current stronger than themselves. These dictatorships submitted to their troops in order to command them. Why be surprised then if they meet with the same obstacles and face the same dangers?

For the Bolsheviks the dictatorship of the proletariat is only a means to an end, which is communism. For many of their partisans, the dictator-

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ship is an end in itself. From top to bottom of the ladder, the Soviet Government has to cope with the ambitions of its administrators. The peasant —whether of present-day Russia or of France in the Year II of the Revolution—wants to keep his crop. He balks at exchanging it for depreciated currency. Sometimes violence has to be used to break down the doors of his barn. The worker considers the factory his own. He works as little as possible, seeing in revolution the right to laziness. The bureaucrats who take inventory, requisition and distribute goods, take advantage of their position. So in reality the class dictatorship is contorted into a vast pilfering operation by petty tyrants. The *Chinovniks* of Lenin are no better than those of Nikolai II.

Lenin realizes this and tries to meet it forcefully. Thieves who were caught redhanded during the October Revolution were shot on the spot as an example. Lenin is not far from proclaiming, with Robespierre, that the motive force of the new régime must be virtue—in other words, the sacrifice of private interests to the common good. Lenin stresses the great need for increasing production through intensified, disciplined labor. "The Russians," he declared, "are poor workers compared with the citizens of advanced countries. To learn how to work—that is the problem Soviet Power must put in all its grandeur before the people." Nor does he hesitate to defend piecework and even the Taylor system, which Western trade-unionists consider serfdom. He understands very well that the problem of production and distribution cannot be solved merely by regulations, but is, up to a certain point, a question of morale. Therefore he has organized a great campaign to educate the people through the press and by conferences of the Socialist Academy. By these means he hopes to raise the culture level of the masses and inaugurate a revolution of the spirit.

Here again the Bolsheviks imitate the Jacobins. The latter made morale the order of the day and sought to educate the masses and curb selfishness by setting up a grandiose interlocking system of civil holidays and social institutions, for which the *ad hoc* periodical, *Selection of Heroic and Civic Deeds,* served as the organ. Like the Jacobins, the Bolsheviks broke with the Church and divorced it from the State. Up till now they have not felt the need that their forebears did to replace the old cult with a new one more suited to their policy, but they are already on that road, too.

Already Lenin is worried about the gradual intrusion of parliamentarism into the Soviets. "This must be fought against," he says, "by drawing all members of the Soviets into active participation in the administration." He does not want the reign of the speechifier any more than he wants the reign of the bureaucratic chair-warmer. Before him, Saint-Just had warned of the same perils: "The city is almost taken over by functionaries. In the

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assemblies they dispose of jobs and votes; in the popular societies they decide opinions. Under the pretext of acting as revolutionaries, they all secure independence and the most absolute power for themselves, as if revolutionary power lived only through them."

BUT THE GREATEST THREATS TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT are perhaps not internal. Sabotage, assassinations, *jacqueries,* revolts are less to be feared than blockades and foreign wars. The relationship between the two kinds of threat is evident. The Montagnards of the Year II had to face the same situation. They emerged from it through military victory; "Conquer or die" was their slogan. Brought to power by the exhaustion and weariness of a people clamoring for peace, the Bolsheviks first had to yield to the current. Their defeatism has been a tactic—nothing more. They have had to go to war again to save their compromised revolution—and their heads. The future of Bolshevism will be decided upon the battlefield, as was the fate of Jacobinism.

After victory the Jacobins were divided, and this division spelled their doom. The army became the arbiter of their quarrels, and the Republic was finally confiscated by a victorious general.

Will Bolshevism meet the same fate? We shall soon find out if its armies are capable of surmounting the external danger and suppressing the last revolts. Will Trotsky and Lenin remain united? Will a Russian 9th Thermidor follow the days between May 31 and October 25? And will a successful 18th Brumaire by a more adroit Kornilov put an end to the tragedy? That is tomorrow's secret.

History never repeats itself exactly. But the resemblances that our analysis has shown to exist between the two great crises of 1793 and 1917 are neither superficial nor casual. The Russian revolutionists copy their French prototypes voluntarily and knowingly. They are animated by the same spirit. They have to grapple with the same problems in a similar atmosphere. Times differ; civilization has marched on for a century and a quarter. But because of its backwardness, Russia resembles illiterate, agricultural 18-century France more than is generally believed.

It will be interesting to observe, and rich material for reflection, if the rhythm of the two revolutions follows the same beat until the end.

Translated by TRAVERS CLEMENT

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Miscellany

The Hollywood Imagination

G. L. Arnold

The following item is reprinted, with permission, from the English monthly Twentieth Century, *where it appeared as a note by its editor. We think it an interesting comment on an aspect of American life as seen by an English observer.—Ed.*

ATOMIC RADIATION CONTINUES to make history. Last spring one learned that it had got under the skins of some luckless Japanese fishermen anchoring within range of the H-bomb experiment. Now it is shown to have seeped into the skulls of some enterprising Hollywood producers. *Them*, a film currently showing in London, is art's latest tribute to the malign power of science. Its theme, if not its execution, is worthy of Jules Verne, grandfather of science fiction. We are shown a stretch of the New Mexican desert swarming with giant creatures who can, and do, crush human beings in their mandibles after descending upon them to the accompaniment of a shrill, ear-splitting whine curiously reminiscent of air-raid warnings. They are Ants grown to monstrous size through a genetic mutation brought about by the first atomic explosion in New Mexico nine years ago. Led by their Queen Ants—winged monsters who successfully attack a U.S. destroyer on the high seas—they swarm over the American continent, spreading terror and destruction among Government officials and scientists resolved to shield the public from the awful truth. Finally they are cornered—in the sewers of Los Angeles, not far from the film capital itself—and taken into custody by Army detachments equipped with machine-guns and flame-throwers. The Nest is destroyed; the great scientist and his daughter, who have led the watchful FBI sleuth to the Nest, are able to pronounce that the last Queen has been killed, and that no eggs are left from which successors might be hatched. The danger is over. It has been a narrow escape for America and for the world: we have heard the professor tell a high-level conference of generals and admirals in Washington that these Ants are capable, given a few more years in which to propagate their kind, of making life impossible for the human race.

It does not take long, in watching this horror to end all horrors, to realize that, like other recent Hollywood offerings, it carries a Message. The Message is: trust the FBI and watch out for deadly monsters who infest America. The Ants in fact are Reds. We are told by the professor that they are highly organized, adept at social co-operation, warlike and destructive, and quite capable of battling mankind for control of the earth. The air attack on the destroyer certainly seems well planned; there is a touch of Pearl Harbor about it. And the Nest in the sewers of Los Angeles, with all the chief monsters sitting in committee before the Army bursts in and wipes them out, might have come out of a spy thriller. At any moment one expects to hear the professor launch into a peroration about our threatened liberties. It need hardly be added that the monsters thrive on human blood—although they also show an incongruous penchant for sugar.

Americans tend to complain that British film critics take Hollywood too seriously. As it happens, *Them* has not had a hostile reception; most reviewers seem to have shrugged it off as a rather infantile horror story relieved by a few touches of technical skill. It is in fact an extremely repulsive piece of science fiction, guaranteed to provide juvenile audiences with a crop of outsize nightmares. But its real significance lies deeper. Films such as these are meant to frighten, and it is possible that in America they achieve this purpose, though elsewhere they will be treated as mere curiosities. The danger is that they may help to create a state of mind in which political problems are viewed exclusively in crime-detection terms, with the flame-thrower as the only suitable argument. If monsters are lurking in the sewers of our big cities, ready to murder us in our beds, obviously we had best throw restraint to the winds and call in

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the Army. *Them* is a plea for violence, as well as a coldly calculated essay in box-office strategy. It is infantile, loathsome and sadistic. It almost justifies the assertion that our civilization shows signs of decadence.

Did Anyone Say "War Prosperity?"

Helen Mears

OUR ELECTIONS ARE NOTABLE for verbiage. But now that the air has been cleared of campaign oratory, what emerges is that only one issue aroused wide-spread interest—prosperity, i.e., full production and full employment. The recent election made it clear that by now both major parties accept the idea that the government is responsible for economic prosperity. It is also clear that neither party has discovered any satisfactory method of assuring the American standard of living except through high-level war preparations. Whether people vote for Democrats or Republicans, they can be quite sure that they are voting for a permanent war economy as the underpinning of our economic and social stability.

In 1952, the Democrats campaigned on the "Republican Depression." The Republicans replied by accusing the Democrats of having achieved a "phony prosperity" based on war and war production. The Republicans claimed that they would bring both prosperity and peace. This line proved so salable that it helped put the Republicans in office.

In the recent election President Eisenhower presented the same line again, though in milder form:

> We have proved at last that America can go from war to peace without a terrifying depression . . . This Administration is working vigorously to bring about a lasting solution . . . Unemployment today stands much below the levels of 1950. It is not even one-third of the 1940 level. In both those years millions of people had been without jobs for long periods. And they didn't get jobs until the nation went to war. Then workers got jobs in uniform or in war plants. No wonder, no wonder many had come to believe that America could prosper only when American blood was flowing on the field of battle . . .
> I am quite sure that Americans don't want to pay for any pseudo or false prosperity in the blood of their sons and brothers on the battlefields.

This Republican charge—that the Democrats achieved prosperity only by war production and jobs in the armed services—was dramatized by the "bird dog" episode of Secretary of Defense Wilson. His slip—which was taken to mean that he looked upon workers as dogs—should not lead us to overlook his point, which was that a young man was better off looking for a job, even in a distant state, than being shot at in the army. He was replying to a critic who implicitly assumed that our military apparatus is the answer to unemployment. This assumption and its corollary—that military procurement is the road to high-level production and prosperity—has by now permeated the whole country.

Confronted by the Republican charge that Democratic Prosperity was War Prosperity, the Democrats were remarkably composed. With few exceptions the Democrats did not even trouble to answer this charge, but instead based their major effort on the assertion that the Republicans by their military "economy" measures were jeopardizing both economic stability and national security. To counter this charge the Republicans went into the final week of the campaign determined to persuade the voters that their devotion to peace did not lead them to any idea so extreme as an objection to war production. On October 29, 1954 the N. Y. *Times* reported:

> ARMY NAVY LIST BILLION IN ORDERS. Pentagon Denies the Unusual Announcement for October is Linked to Elections.

The story from Washington explained that the Defense Department had announced that the Army and Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics was placing a billion dollars in contracts in October, and that the Air Force was preparing a similar announcement for release the

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following day. Any connection with the election was denied although officials in the Pentagon acknowledged they could not remember a single past occasion when monthly defense contract totals had been announced before the end of the month.

Still, the Republicans didn't forget that they were the Peace Party. During their concluding campaign efforts they developed a pleasing counterpoint of Prosperity Without War as slogan and Prosperity Through War Contracts as reality. On October 30 President Eisenhower sounded the Peace theme and recapitulated the charge against the Democrats. "EISENHOWER VOWS JOBS WITHOUT WAR," reported the *Times*. Fearing, perhaps, that some of the nervous unemployed might take this seriously, the administration announced the same day, as the *Times* put it, that "PENTAGON REVEALS 5 BILLION CONTRACTS." And on November 1, the voters were given a final reassurance: "MILITARY BUYING PRIMES INDUSTRY. September Orders for Goods Give Manufacturers Biggest Lift Since '53 Downturn."

So it went. The Republicans, like the Democrats before them, counted on "prosperity" for votes, and counted on war preparations for prosperity. We all hate war, but war production—that has become the health of the state.

Science and Religion in America

Ned Polsky

AMERICA NOW HAS A LARGE intellectual industry devoted to showing that there is no conflict between science and religion, an industry that is but one aspect of the increasing general tendency to play down elements of conflict in American life.

Never before in the history of America have scientist and theologian worked so well togther.

The prize speaker in any church lecture series is a scientist (preferably atomic) who stands up for God. We have psychoanalysts who also profess to be devout Catholics, a spectacle which should make Catholics shudder no less than the psychoanalysts. To elaborate only on this one special area of science: think of the careers of people like Gregory Zilboorg; and of the American renaissance of interest in Jung as opposed to Freud, apparently motivated chiefly by Jung's bias in favor of religion. All our scientists seem to be like the physicist whom Herbert Spencer castigated because "when he entered his oratory he shut the door of his laboratory." (*The Study of Sociology*. "Oratory" is here used in the sense of a private chapel.)

The "men of God," for their part, are similarly eager to avoid a fight. On the level of social role-taking, the priest no longer conceives of himself as *different* from ordinary men, no longer acts the role of one set apart by virtue of a higher calling. On the contrary, he is frightened to death of this; he stumbles all over himself in his desire to conform to the Hollywood image (Bing Crosby) of the priest as "a regular guy" who is at heart "just one of the boys." He is grimly determined to be "modern." Newspaper editors gleefully fall in line by printing pictures of priests playing baseball, nuns in the bowling alley, etc. Billy Sunday, for all his absurdities, *gave up* a successful professional baseball career to become an evangelist; today he would no doubt continue to play baseball, and lecture on the Y.M.C.A. circuit in the off-season. And there is more than one way to look at Jane Russell.

On the ideological level, we need mention merely that Darwinian evolutionary theory is now taught in Jesuit colleges. When religion is threatened, its incorporative powers are tremendous. As Andrew Dickson White remarked about the Church's position on a scientific discovery which conflicts with dogma, "First they denounce it violently, then they admit it quietly, and finally they deny they were ever against it." James Joyce describes the process as follows:

"Thus confronted, it was a trick of the pleader for orthodoxy to suggest a possible reconciliation between neighbors and to suggest further that the Church would not be over hasty in condemning

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vagaries of architecture or even the use of pagan emblems and flourishes so long as her ground rent was paid quarterly in advance. . . . The moral doctrine of Catholicism so cunningly lined and interwoven with a studious alloy of conscience was capable under the management of a nimble spirit of performing feats of extension and contraction. After a thousand such changes of form this elastic body was suddenly detected in a change of position and a point hitherto external was seen to be enclosed within it; and all this imperceptibly, while the eye was lulled by the mere exhibition of so many variations executed with a certain amoeboid instinct." (*Stephen Hero*)

As Bertrand Russell has put it, "Theologians have grown grateful for small mercies, and they do not much care what sort of God the man of science gives them so long as he gives them one at all." (*The Scientific Outlook*)

Let us not make the mistake of thinking that this is motivated by the notion "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em." It is just as much motivated by the notion "if you can't beat 'em, make 'em join you." That is what accounts for the standard reply of today's theologian when confronted with the avowed atheist: "Even though you claim to be an atheist, you are really a very religious man." Our theologians are constrained to admit the existence of atheism *in vacuo*, because religion, like any other ideology, derives meaning and strength from the concept of its negation; however, they apparently cannot bear to admit its existence in concrete situations involving real people. Their favorite dodge is to claim that the alleged atheist is critical merely of religion as a *secular institution* rather than of religious *faith* as such. The reason for the typical theological distortion of atheist criticism is perhaps best explained by Friedrich Nietzsche:

"Higher culture is necessarily misunderstood. He who has but two strings on his instrument—like the scholars who, in addition to the urge for knowledge, have only the religious urge, instilled by education—does not understand those who can play on more strings. It is of the essence of the higher, multi-stringed culture that it is always misinterpreted by the lower culture—as happens, for example, when art is considered a disguised form of religion. Indeed, people who are only religious understand even science as a search of the religious feeling, just as deaf-mutes do not know what music is, if it is not visible movement." (*Human, All-Too-Human*)

It should not be supposed that the semantic and ideological mishmash described by Nietzsche is an exclusively Roman Catholic art. Star witness to the contrary: Paul Tillich.

The denial of conflict is rarely put forward in bluntly negative terms; it is rather done by emphasizing the positive goals of "peace of mind," "peace of soul," etc. For permanent immunity from such professional harmonizers, one can again prescribe a dose of Nietzsche:

"The price of fruitfulness is to be rich in internal opposition; one remains young only as long as the soul does not stretch itself and desire peace. Nothing has become more alien to us than that desideratum of former times, "peace of soul," the *Christian* desideratum; there is nothing we envy less than the moralistic cow and the fat happiness of the good conscience. One has renounced the *great* life when one renounces war." (*Twilight of the Idols.* As Professor Walter Kaufmann has demonstrated, "war" in the Nietzschean context must be understood as an *intellectual* battle, and not in the literal sense that Nazi apologists fondly imagined.)

The American situation we have described hardly existed until recent decades. The religionists on the one hand, and the old-time rationalists on the other (*e.g.* Robert Ingersoll), knew that they were engaged in a fight in which no compromise was possible. Tracing the causes of this historical shift is a key problem for American sociology. But one wonders if sociologists will be up to the job, for sociologists, too, have been caught in the general drift toward denial of conflict. In the early days of sociology, it was taken for granted that social conflict was a major form of social interaction in all societies at all times. Today, if sociologists discuss conflict at all, they increasingly do so in

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courses bearing some such rubric as "Social Pathology." For the typical American sociologist, conflict is pathological by definition. It may well be, then, that the job will have to be done by radical journalists who proclaim their values freely, rather than by social scientists with their pseudo-objectivity.

Dick and Joe

I HOLD WITH THOSE (probably our ranks have grown since the Fall election) who insist that Vice President Richard Nixon, may be a far greater danger to the Republic than Joe McCarthy. The recent campaign seems to bear this out.

Joe McCarthy is an upstart and a primitive; a Jacobin among the Neanderthals. His star may already have reached its zenith. The "Committee of Ten Million for Justice for Joe" (are there that many retired Admirals and Vice-Admirals in the country?) seems to hint at a low point in his career, although no sober man will count him out yet. Still, McCarthy is retreating into his cave, grunting, slobbering, bitter. Witness his performance before the Senate committee whose report paved the way for his censure: a pitiful caricature of the old, rough-house Joe. Full of resentment, complaints and self-pity. Misunderstood. The Caliban of American politics.

McCarthy seems wounded to the quick; he snarls at practically the whole Senate body, that corps of great deliberators whose tacit approval pushed him forward. His swings are wilder and miss their mark; a word from him no longer brings the old fear and trembling. Even the liberals take heart and, routing out yesterday's despair, announce that "Joe is dead." The old sparks strike no fire; worse still, his thunder seems to have been stolen, organized, planified and institutionalized—even bureaucratized! No bare-knuckle, knee-in-the-groin fighter can survive that humiliation. Joe reduced to a political institution? By whom?

By Dick Nixon, of course, America's first Vice-President elected via the Soap Opera trail, a trail which for him began in the cradle. In Dick we have Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy, arrived —or almost so. When Jack, the AAB, first came to life we could afford to laugh at him, this preposterous image of the clean-cut, Anglo-Saxon, middle class lad. But Jack took a High School course in public speaking, proved to be championship material on the debating team (that's where he learned to find shallow arguments for all sides of any question), caught on to the All-American art of cuddling up to any politician or business man, known in the trade as a "useful contact" and, before one knew it, he was presiding over the "world's greatest deliberative body" and running an election campaign for a major political party!

Nixonism is McCarthyism with its nails pared and cleaned, its 5 o'clock shadow shaved off. It is McCarthyism systematized, made palatable for the respectable and the decent, brought into harmony with current interpretations of the "American way of Life." But what honest man wouldn't prefer, if that's the word, to find himself covered from head to foot with good clean mud slung by Joe's shovel? A hot shower and it's off. Slime mixed with oil sticks much longer.

Can Dick go further than Joe? Theoretically at least, yes. He sticks close to those who represent power, he's well set on the "inside" and he intends to remain there. Further, he's without scruple, will attack anyone for . . . Dick. Joe, after all, stuck by his Cohn and Schine! Dick has a masterly eye for the main chance.

But there's hope for us, after all. The Vice Presidency is notoriously the trap door to oblivion. Can Dick avoid the drop? Certainly that will be one of the big political doings in 1956. O'erweening ambition, which drove Dick to accept the second best spot, may have been fatal. But still he will have contributed something to our history: the first High School boy voted "most-likely-to-succeed" who—succeeded! S. P.

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BOOKS

A. A. Berle and the Corporate Soul

THE 20TH CENTURY CAPITALIST REVOLUTION, by Adolph A. Berle, Jr. Harcourt, Brace and Co., N. Y. 192 pages. $3.00.

The place of monopoly in the modern world was highlighted some twenty years ago when Adolph Berle and Gardiner Means published their explosive study, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*. Originating in the get-rich-quick boom of the Twenties, it demonstrated that the growing complexities of corporate structures made stockholder control a myth. No longer did property carry with it the right to dispose of its usufruct, since widespread stock dispersion made it possible for self-perpetuating oligarchies to decide on price and production without regard to the concerns of legal ownership. Berle and Means showed also that the 200 largest non-financial corporations held about half the nation's corporate assets. After the appearance of this book it was difficult to argue that competition, at least in its Smithian or Ricardian visage, was meaningful to modern man.

However, the notion of a competitive economy dies hard. There are economists today who will argue that the share which large corporations hold of total assets is relatively unimportant; that their impact on society has been exaggerated; and that anyway we possess ample controls to check their forays into non-economic areas. The tendency for these companies to spread into fields originally alien to their purposes is overlooked. Yet it is the frequent use of covert political pressure to attain economic ends that raises a question about their social role. It is, in other words, the sociological and political aspects of corporate reality that become important: otherwise it is difficult to explain how corporate oligopoly has been able to harden and congeal atomistic competitive capitalism.

One might hope that in a new book Mr. Berle would come up with some fresh insights concerning the modern corporation. But readers will only meet disappointment here. The most charitable statement that may be made is that it is a strange work for one who once knew and understood more clearly than most the pervasive impact of corporations on contemporary existence. The book, however, is neither a defense nor a critique: it is best described as a safe squat in the middle. Some recent newspaper reviews suggested that Mr. Berle was offering an eloquent defense of the corporate way of life. This, though, is done but hyperbolically: there is no direct statement that corporate monopolies may be justified by what they do, in the manner, say, of Schumpeter. Yet

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Mr. Berle does come fairly close to it, only to back away at the last moment in fear and confusion. This explains why it is hard to pin the book down and come up with a specific characterization of its content. Its line of argument has the consistency of warmed-over taffy which, clinging to the fingers as it comes apart, slowly stretches itself out in all directions.

PERHAPS THE BEST THING TO DO, and in a way the fairest, is to present Mr. Berle's thesis *in seriatim*. Mr. Berle is disturbed by the quasi-political behavior of corporations. He recognizes that old-fashioned competition has been displaced by a more genteel rivalry among huge aggregations of capital. Corporations are no longer private domains, he says, but carriers of public responsibility, in which attempts are always made to balance supply and demand. The corporate way of extracting raw materials, fabricating goods, and distributing and selling them, has become so institutionalized that not even divesting it of its legal status would hamper its ability to get things done. Corporations are at the center of society: an example is General Motors, which extends its influence far beyond its own industry, on to gas stations, tire shops and accessory establishments.

Unable to deny his still viable thesis of two decades ago, Mr. Berle concedes that the question of who controls this overwhelming aggregation of power is crucial. Even the one-time check exerted through "ownership" is no longer available, for almost 65 per cent of industrial capital is now derived from internal savings. Only 6 per cent of corporate capital is obtained from venture sources, that is, stock purchases, while the remainder is either borrowed on a short-term basis or privately placed with investment bankers. Even the tenuous control that might be exerted through stock holdings is now nothing more than a copywriter's slogan.

Berle recognizes that in such a matrix the limitation of corporate power is essential and he discovers somewhere in his political-economic horizon what he believes to be meaningful and practicable lines of control. These he defines as public opinion, countervailing power and the threat of state intervention. Much may be said about these notions as useful devices: generally the evidence has demonstrated that they have seldom worked in any effective manner. Yet Berle urges upon us the proposition that these "controls" will enforce truthful practices on corporations: by this he doubtless means that business managers walk in trepidation, thus making the public a remarkable defender of its own interests.

One wonders too what to make of the long disquisition on the internal political security problem and its effect on corporate behavior. Here there is an apparent clash of government and private power, for ought not a corporation, under capitalism, possess the right to decide for itself whom it shall employ? What troubles Mr. Berle is that the corporation, by accepting a government contract, has converted itself into an ally of the state. More and more, private and government property are being mingled, yet this, a "consequence of galloping capitalism", is in many ways a welcome development. Technologically, its benefits are unbounded. But politically the intertwining of government and private corporation creates a tangled web of rights and obliga-

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tions. In all this there must be some way of protecting the individual: perhaps, says Berle, an appeal to a court of equity *within the corporate structure* would guarantee personal freedom. But more important is the state of mind that managers and government officials will exhibit: they must have a conscience about these things—they must love liberty deeply. A government run like a private business is tyranny; a private business run like a government agency is "irresponsible socialist bureaucracy."

The solution to this dilemma rests in the recognition that unlimited power in our constitutional framework is intolerable. Only the growth of conscience offers a hope for sanity. The personnel director of a large corporation, a vice-president in charge of sales, a conscientious security officer in a government agency, a contracting officer in a defense department, must all be aware that this is still a world of people. Unfortunately for Mr. Berle, the picture of a growing corporate or governmental conscience is poorly drawn. The passionate regard for the individual personality that this would imply seems most conspicuous by its absence. What Mr. Berle is asking for is a kind and gentle garrison state. The anomaly is more frightening than Mars himself.

Nothing has been said of the author's praise for the behavior of corporations in international affairs or his artless belief in business planning for public welfare or the equally strange notion that corporate gifts to universities demonstrate the validity of his theory of conscience. But what is one to say of ideas that have no roots in ordinary sense, that are wrapped in a mephitic ideology, and whose very mysticism betrays a feeling of discomfort with the hard realities of 20th century capitalism? Simply put, the beliefs in Mr. Berle's book are soft and soggy, like a sandwich gone bad. BEN B. SELIGMAN

The Quality of Liberal Thought

AMERICAN THOUGHT, Morris Raphael Cohen. The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1954. $5.00.

While this series of sketches of American thought was intended to be comprehensive, it was far from complete at the time of Cohen's death, and the result is less thorough than could have been wished. American philosophy and religion engage Cohen's attention for almost half the book, while political thought receives a scant twenty pages. But the section on American jurisprudence is more thorough and penetrating, and some consideration is given to American ideas on history, science, and economics. Especially enjoyable are the thumbnail profiles of such individual thinkers as Pound, Cardozo, Peirce, Whitehead, and C. I. Lewis.

If Cohen lacks the substantiality and incisiveness of a Cassirer, it must also be admitted that, after all, he was not writing about a period as brilliant as the Enlightenment. But Cohen's gift for criticism, when trained on his own writing, apparently inhibited the flow of his thought. Elsewhere, reflecting on his own intellectual equipment, he had noted his "lack of vigorous following through. No bold strokes. . . . None of the vitality and flare of genius of James or Santayana. . . . Yet withal a tenacious cling-

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ing to truth." These limitations show up clearly enough in *American Thought*, but so does his courageous veracity.

Politically, Cohen thought of himself as a "liberal," a term which he felt identified the commitment to scientific method. (Peirce, whose essays Cohen had once edited, had identified the same commitment as "radical.") If the term "liberal" had unfortunate connotations because of the abuses committed in its name, he knew that neither "liberalism" nor "socialism" nor "scientific inquiry" nor any other term could ever be kept from being seized upon and held aloft as the banner of someone's stupidity. One could appeal, he knew, to the ancient traditions of liberalism, but one could not ignore the fact that those traditions were seriously compromised by their indulgent attitude—towards vicious economic practices carried on in the name of "political liberty," and towards vicious political practices carried on in the name of "economic democracy."

Yet he stuck to the term "liberal"—or grew into it, from his early socialism—in the conservative hope that it represented a minimal condition for human association. He saw clearly enough the limitations of men like Brandeis and Holmes and Veblen and Dewey, and at times spoke of them in a way that others considered carping or contentious. But Cohen was not prepared to risk upon any fad of an idea, any more than a scientist could risk upon any fad of a theory, the ideals and values which he felt to be crucial for a civilization with few values to spare, and in danger of losing those it possessed. And so he was fearful and suspicious of the enormous State apparatus in which so many of his fellow liberals had placed their faith; yet he gently advocated (with what misgivings or regret one cannot say) an increasing extension of that apparatus for the public welfare. He had apparently no overall solution of his own to advocate, nor did he wish to prevent others from trying to achieve what progress they could. To Dewey's passionate faith in reason used constructively, he opposed an equally passionate faith in its being used critically, and a resigned pessimism about its ever being used at all. His liberalism then—somehow, curiously, more reminiscent of Jefferson than of anyone else—rested on the belief that one should liberate men from the manacles of superstition, and then let them choose to do with their freedom as they pleased, providing they in turn left one free to criticize their schemes and procedures. Hardly a positive, programmatic position, but nevertheless a hardy one which would continue to persist after many more rigid doctrines had been quite thoroughly shattered by events.

Cohen abhorred his countrymen's absorption in immediate problems and short-range solutions, their elaborate justifications of expediency, their denial or ignorance of matters of ultimate import and concern. He distrusted their rigid insistence upon moral duties, the bland assumption of progress and betterment, the easy, casual faith in such vague, question-begging terms as "education" and "democracy." With our narrow humanism and illiberal outlook, we neglect the cosmic eminence of the system of nature. But no philosophy is "really humane, or avoids needless cruelty, unless it recognizes the inevitability of human suffering, defeat, death, and destruction and provides some anodyne through wisely cultivated resignation." Men need rest from the strenuous life, escape from the depressing horrors of the human scene. "Human beings have probably derived as much happiness from accepting their lot as from efforts, so often tragically vain, to improve it." Faced with incurable evils in an imperfect world, the human spirit must find some larger vision or perish. "The human need to worship is fundamental."

Men have much to learn from a renewed insistence upon the Stoic message, as Cohen presents it, that we must firmly distinguish between what is and what is not within our power. Nor can we dispense with the serenity that comes from seeing the human scene in its natural setting. But we are also free to ask whether the forces beyond man's control, to which he is necessarily subordinate, are to be equated with matters of ultimate concern—simply because they are beyond man's control. As de

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Tocqueville once observed, people have a way of finding superior wisdom in the person of their oppressor. However vast the setting of Nature may be when compared with human experience, it is hard to see why we must impute to it some superordinate significance. And if human existence must inevitably be so tragic, is it not paradoxical to reverence its sources?

Nonetheless, Cohen's broad and tolerant attitude can serve as an antidote and a challenge. After all, when people raise only those questions which they have decided in advance are answerable, they will have lost sight of many values which the problem-saving procedure was supposed to bring to realization.

MATTHEW LIPMAN

Books Received

A TREASURY OF YIDDISH STORIES, edited by Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg. Drawings by Ben Shahn. Viking. $5.95. — The first comprehensive anthology of Yiddish literature. 23 authors, 52 stories, almost all newly translated. (Among the translators: Charles Angoff, Saul Bellow, Alfred Kazin, Ludwig Lewisohn, Issac Rosenfeld.)

A DANGEROUS FREEDOM, by Bradford Smith. Lippincott. $3.95 — Discussing the "dangerous freedom" guaranteed by our Constitution, the right of assembly.

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LETTERS

Birthday Greetings

Editors:

Let me take this occasion to congratulate you on your survival of the first year of publication, and to extend to you my very best wishes for success in the coming year and thereafter. You are rendering an invaluable service to a group of people who had almost come to the conclusion that socialist thought in America had withered in the bud.

G. S.

Editors:

Congratulations upon the first birthday of DISSENT. Your magazine deserves credit in every respect—from the excellent way in which the articles published have fulfilled your commendable high purpose, to the effectiveness of the format and cover design.

B. H.

Editors:

I have found your magazine extremely stimulating, and it has forced me to do a lot of thinking in the area of politics which I would not have otherwise done. I have appreciated in particular Coser and Howe's article "Images of Socialism", which quieted many doubts I have had with respect to that philosophy, and I warmly recommend the technique of the three-cornered debate that you used in the article (summer issue) on the future of Russian society.

R. H. H.

Editors:

This is to let you know how much I enjoy DISSENT. It has easily become the most eagerly awaited magazine that I receive. DISSENT is also the most intellectually stimulating magazine that I know or read.

I would like to add a word on a controversy that arose in your magazine over criticism aimed at Sidney Hook, and the *New Leader* type of liberal-socialist (?). There is no valid reason they should not be criticized when honestly believed to be at fault. But, somehow you seem to save your best barbs for them! It lacks a sense of charity, especially since the breed is somewhat related. You should try to correct Hook, not slash him. These people sooner or later will listen to reason . . . try to convert.

J. R. B.

Djilas and Dedijer

The case of the two Yugoslavian socialists, Milovan Djilas and Vladimir Dedijer, is reported as this issue of DISSENT goes to press. We are therefore unable to offer more than a brief comment at this time.

However, several things must be said. Whatever one's views on Titoism and Yugoslavia, socialists and democrats alike cannot fail to view with keen anxiety a situation in which men are to be placed on trial for holding dissenting views. Further, too many familiar and distasteful elements already figure in the pre-trial preparations: denunciations in the government controlled press; recantations by former associates of the accused; preliminary hearings in secret; the building up of a heresy-hunting atmosphere and, not least of all, the trial before three government appointed judges, without a jury.

Is it too much to suggest that here, once again, is a classic occasion for the international socialist and labor movement to intervene, in the name of its democratic ideals? Why, for example, could not the Socialist International ask to have observers and lawyers present at the trial? Why should not open and public hearings be insisted upon? Elementary human solidarity and defense of the "right to dissent" cry out on behalf of the two defendants. Let this occasion not be lost too!

—The Editors

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